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The Train, Grierson, Young, and Hope  
Manuscripts, *Edited, with an Introduction*

BY

ROBERT T. FITZHUGH

WITH

**THE JOURNAL OF THE**  
**BORDER TOUR**

*Edited by*

DELANCEY FERGUSON



CHAPEL HILL

The University of North Carolina Press  
1943

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BY  
THE SEEMAN PRINTERY, INC., DURHAM, N. C.

To  
D W F





## **PREFACE**

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IT IS HOPED that publication in full of the documents in this volume will make it easier to understand the man Burns was and was not. Professor Ferguson has most generously contributed the first complete text of the Journal of the Border Tour. To Mr. William Angus, Keeper of the Registers and Records of Scotland and custodian of the Grierson papers, I am indebted for access to those papers and for permission to publish them. And without the gracious leave of the Chancellor and the Principal of the University of Edinburgh, who allowed me to include the Train, Hope, and Young MSS, the volume could not have come into existence. Nor can I permit John McVie, Secretary of the Burns Federation, to remain the silent partner in this enterprise which his generous nature would prefer. It was he who first called my attention to the Grierson papers and who lent me invaluable aid in transcribing them. Finally, my special gratitude is due Professor C. B. Hale, of the University of Maryland, for reading and criticizing my manuscript.

The Train, Hope, Young, and Grierson MSS have all been reproduced as exactly as print and human frailty

allow, but it should be mentioned that in the interpretation of capital letters, particularly "K," "P," and "S" in Young, in the choice of dash or period, in the recording of such abbreviations as "Mr." and "Edinr.," and in the placing of apostrophes in Young, it has often been necessary to act fairly arbitrarily. MS eccentricities possibly attributable to editorial laxity have been marked "(sic)," but here, too, consistency has been difficult.

R. T. F

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Works frequently mentioned have been abbreviated in the notes as follows

Robert Chambers, revised by William Wallace, *The Life and Works of Robert Burns*, Edinburgh, 1896, 4 vols (Referred to as Ch-W).

DeLancey Ferguson, *The Letters of Robert Burns*, Oxford, 1931, 2 vols (Referred to as Ferguson, the italicized number in each reference is that of the letter, and the following roman and arabic numbers are those of the volume and page)

W. E. Henley and T. F. Henderson, *The Poetry of Robert Burns*, London, 1896, 4 vols. (Referred to as H&H)

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# **I**

## **INTRODUCTION**



# I

## INTRODUCTION

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### Robert Burns His Tradition and His Work

What sort of man was Robert Burns? His birth, the paradox of his position, the richly embroidered tradition of his career as tavern drinker and amorist at large, his buoyant youthful defiance of convention, kirk, and king (especially when they interfered with his pleasures), his good humor and good fellowship—all these, together with the pathos of his early death, brought him blazing publicity in his own time. And, while only Scots now read much of Burns, and they the wrong poems and for the wrong reasons, the world is still fascinated by the man.

His reputation suffers yet from his early biographers. The first, Dr Currie, felt the need to "gloss over his failings," and too many others wrote in the spirit of an unidentified critic who proclaimed in an obituary notice, "Let others profit by the misconduct of Burns." A nineteenth-century ferment of reticence, piety, sentiment, and imagination passed for Burns scholarship until William E. Henley protested the "tame, proper, figmentary" Burns which had been raised in the popular mind. Roundly abused for his pains by what he called "common Burnsites," Henley presented Burns not as an ignorant genius



who burst inexplicably into great poetry, but as a man of more than common reading who worked in a well-established poetic tradition, not as a "proper, mid-Victorian journalist," but as a racy, salty, masculine countryman with immense gusto and a shrewd, not to say Rabelaisian, eye for men and their ways, not as a gross sinner who had miraculously produced fine poetry and tender songs, but as a man of tempestuous passions, who, ironically, rose to greatness in large measure because of them. He admitted much in Burns' life that one cannot admire. Burns did not admire it himself. A man in considerable measure does as he must and not as he will. Furthermore, we should note Professor Ferguson's remark that Burns was not so much a conspicuous sinner as one who sinned conspicuously. Scholarship and a more candid and tolerant public have come to agree with Henley that Burns as he lived, if not so satisfying to romantic piety, is better than Burns interpreted by reverent Victorian biographers.

During his first two decades, Burns seemed merely another intelligent young farmer in meager circumstances and with a taste for books, but by his early twenties he was already distinguished in his neighborhood, as he now is in the world, for satiric wit, humor, sentiment, for assertive self-confidence and a desire to shock and startle, for love of company and free talk, and for love of women. We have early accounts of his discomfiting his elders in churchyard theological disputes, of his making farm hands roll in a furrow and yell with laughter at his jokes, of his founding and dominating a village debating club—no Y M C A, incidentally, of his gorging himself with sentimental poetry and fiction, of his easy approach with girls, and of the disapproval he stirred among the staid members of the community, who remarked that young Burns seemed to

have a good deal to say for himself. Consciousness at once of his own superiority, of the world's absurdities, and of certain restraints society imposed on him, made Burns cocky and defiant, and urged him to seek the company of other high-spirited youngsters similarly disposed, and to write such poems as his wholly delightful "Welcome to a Bastart Wean." Throughout his life he continued this taste for boisterous and jovial good-fellowship, often over a glass, but neither early nor late did he become a drunkard. In later years he had more time and more money to indulge this taste, and it certainly did his health, ruined by hard work at fifteen, no good. But in hard-drinking eighteenth-century Scotland, Burns was not notable for excess. On the other hand, his love for women brought him by his own statement eleven illegitimate children, four of them (two pairs of twins) by Jean Armour, whom he later married, and who subsequently bore him three sons and a daughter. Comment here is superfluous. However, he is a strict moralist who would wish away the songs and poems celebrating Burns' heroines, and the heroines wished it least of all. One wrote in her diary on the fortieth anniversary of her parting with him, "This day I can never forget. Parted with Burns, in the year 1791, never more to meet in this world. Oh, may we meet in Heaven!" Another, asked in her old age if she remembered nights among the rigs of barley with him, answered with a twinkle, "Aye, brawlie that!" And his own wife remarked with unique authority, "Our Robert should have had two wives." There let the matter rest. It plagued him enough while alive.

For one who indulged himself in reckless self-assertion, Burns was peculiarly vulnerable. He had neither the thick skin to ignore inevitable retaliations, nor the heavy pulse to disdain them. But he would not learn wisdom, and in

consequence he met continued rebuffs and worse. When he had suffered a galling public rebuke in church for his illegal paternity of Betty Paton's child, the laughter that followed his satirical shots at Church Quarrels, Holy Fairs, Holy Willies, and "practical bigotry" in general, was at least partial satisfaction. And one feels a natural sympathy with him. But what can one say of his answering an Edinburgh hostess he had not met that he would be glad to accept her invitation if she would also invite the Learned Pig, then being exhibited for money? Despite his wit we are not surprised that after several such incidents, Edinburgh society dropped him. Nor need we wonder that he made no faster progress in the King's service. Had he not written on a tavern window the following comment on the reigning king, George III, and his family

An idiot race, to honor lost—  
Who know them best despise them most?

Here again, truth, wit, and personal irritation are combined prettily, as they had been in his attacks on the Kirk, but without any of the provocation, and with the marked difference that Burns was now a national figure whose words were given instant circulation. Even less could he now afford the satisfaction of attacks which gratified passing resentments than he could as the Rantin' Dog of Mossiel Farm, particularly when the resentment was trivial and the attack dangerous. But Burns not only failed to curb his spleen, he spoke as though the ill will he generated were largely the hard lot of native genius under a class system. "A man's a man for a' that," he cried; the upper classes grind the lower, who share at least common humanity with them. It is particularly hard for low-born merit to achieve recognition and reward, and particularly galling to see well-born dullness and insolence preferred. Truth, every

word, and honor to him for saying it so movingly. But what of that overflow of the same sentiment which made him propose the following toast to officers in the king's army, "May the last king be hanged in the guts of the last priest?"

One cannot understand Burns or his poetry until he grasps this paradox. his cry for liberty was sharpened by his impatience with restraint; his democracy was more than tinged with resentment of his superiors, and often of the ill will he himself had stirred up unprovoked. His readiness, his wit, his humor were often embittered by too much of the same sense of the world's injustice and hypocrisy and absurdity that gives zest to his poems. The "head-long passions" and "skinless sensibility" that prompted his best poetry also drove him to excesses and outbursts of which no one can be proud. His own lines may be poor apology, but they are simple truth

The light that led astray  
Was light from heaven.

A further paradox is that although his birth and position hampered him and created prickly situations in which his sensitive pride made him writhe and occasionally strike, his fame as a poet is mainly due to his wisdom in avoiding a false gentility in his life and in his art, and in writing of the life he knew, in its own fast-fading dialect of which he was master, and in the spirit of a well-established vernacular tradition

That a clever young Ayrshire farmer in 1780 should have tried his hand at Scots verse is no such great wonder as is often supposed. Burns says of himself, as though it were nothing unusual, that he was "just a rhymer like by chance," one of a common class. His own village boasted three vernacular rhymers, himself, Saunders Tait, a tailor,

and David Sillar, a farm boy like Burns. John Lapraik, of a neighboring village, was another, and many more, like William Simpson, Janet Little, and Symon Gray, crossed Burns' path. Nor has the tradition of village rhymers died out today, J Leslie Mitchell, in a recent novel of Scots village life, included a rhymers as a typical character, and a volume of poems by Burns' great-grandson, Robert Burns Thomson, published in Winnipeg in 1937, attests the urge to rhyme even in Scots transplanted to Western Canada.

Indeed, the wonder is not that Burns followed this tradition and hitched his feelings into rhyme, but that his rhymes were poetry. For there was little in the Scots Vernacular in 1780 to suggest that a great poet would ever again use it as his vehicle. A court language in Henryson and Dunbar's time, the Vernacular in Burns' day was spoken, in a variety of dialects such as his own Ayrshire, mainly by the lower classes. It was still, with an admixture of English, a conventional language of songs and ballads, and of a considerable body of popular humorous poetry and magazine verse, but during the century or more before Burns, with a few exceptions, literary Scots had been trying to write English, and the Scotch public had been supplied largely with English poetry and fiction. Burns spoke English and wrote excellent English prose, and he was thoroughly familiar with English literature of the eighteenth century, but when he attempted verse in the style of that period, he was hopelessly wooden. Success required a finesse of which he confessed himself incapable.

He turned instinctively to the traditional stanzas and forms of familiar vernacular verse, writing of his local scene in a mixture of Scots and English, the latter often couched in the incongruous eighteenth-century formal poetic diction. He confessed his advantage in having two

languages from which to choose words and rhymes, and it is not so much his language as his subjects and spirit and style which mark him as a vernacular poet. Homely realism, jocular good humor, sentiment, homespun satire and reflection, and songs to sing, these were, for his day, traditional vernacular media. In them the effects were free and broad, and not comparable to those of the carefully wrought couplets and stanzas of Young and Shenstone and Goldsmith and Gray, all of whom Burns admired and laid under tribute.

But even as the English poets inherited the tradition of Waller and Dryden and Pope, and a public ear attuned to wit, morality, and the couplet, so did Burns inherit forms and subjects, a style and a public. And his achievement is the more remarkable in that he had no great predecessors to show the way. Even the two men from whom he learned most, Allan Ramsay and particularly Robert Fergusson, though they wrote skillful, racy vernacular poetry well above the level of that by village rhymers, were both, like those rhymers, of chiefly local and contemporary interest. In the Vernacular they wrote mainly of eighteenth-century Edinburgh, its customs and peculiar flavor, poems still choice, but of limited appeal and interesting mainly as the models from which Burns worked.

Their and Burns' verse forms, the tetrameter couplet of "The Twa Dogs" and "Tam o' Shanter," the involved bob-wheel stanza of the "Epistle to Davie," the eight-line stanza with a refrain of "The Holy Fair," and the famous six-line stave built on two rhymes, which Burns found most congenial, these were the common heritage of all Scots vernacular poets. And so were the subjects and patterns of the twenty-five or thirty poems which made Burns' reputation and which sustain it. For, while his dialogues, ad-

dresses, epistles, descriptions of popular gatherings and customs, and humorous poems occasioned by the real or presumed death of the victim, all derive from similar poems in Ramsay and Fergusson, Ramsay's and Fergusson's in turn derived from such poems as "Christ's Kirk o' the Green" and "Peebles to the Play" (racy descriptions of village merrymaking like "Hallowe'en," "The Holy Fair," and "The Jolly Beggars"), as "The Epitaph of Habbie Simpson, Piper of Kilbarchan" (prototype of gusty comic elegies like "I am Samson's"), and as "The Last Dying Words of Bonnie Heck, a famous Grey-hound in the Shire of Fife" (original of many a predecessor to Burns' "unco mournfu' tale" of poor Maillie).

In the last two genres, Ramsay produced "Lucky Spence's Last Advice," a famous bawd's parting words to her charges, and comic elegies to both Maggy Johnstoun, brewer of excellent ale, and John Cowper, an assistant kirk treasurer, part of whose official duty it was to apprehend Edinburgh prostitutes in the name of religion and public morals, while Fergusson wrote a moving elegy to his professor of mathematics at Saint Andrews, who

cou'd divine,  
Whan he did read  
That *three* times *three* just made up nine,  
But now he's dead.

In these and in such descriptions of popular holiday making as Ramsay's continuation of "Christ's Kirk o' the Green" and Fergusson's "Hallow-fair," "Leith Races," and "The Daft-Days" (Christmas and New Year holidays), Burns found not only subjects and hints for developing them, but the way to use poverty and low life picturesquely and with broad good humor. Much the same tone of homespun joviality also marked the versified epistles of Ramsay

and Lieutenant William Hamilton of Gilbertfield, which are the basis of Burns' famous epistles to Davie and Smith and Lapraik. In these loosely joined, personal poems on a variety of topics, Ramsay and Hamilton assumed the character, which Burns also adopted, of boon companions who exchanged jocular criticism and compliment and who sealed their friendship over a bowl.

In both Ramsay and Fergusson and elsewhere, Burns found topics and forms, tricks of phrase and points of style. But, aside from some suggestions in Fergusson, the qualities in his poems that continue to move us are almost wholly lacking in the best vernacular verse from which he took his bearings. In Fergusson's work alone is there much more than a keen eye for amusing detail and interest in humorous situation. In him there is zest for the human comedy and sympathetic interest in man's struggles, and hopes, and achievements, and even ludicrous failures. Moreover, Burns found in Fergusson something of the spirit that later guided him in the famous lines describing Tam o' Shanter at the inn

Ae market-night,  
Tam had got planted unco right,  
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,  
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely,  
And at his elbow, Souter Johnie,  
His ancient, trusty, drouthy cronie  
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither,  
They had been fou for weeks thegither  
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter,  
And ay the ale was growing better  
The landlady and Tam grew gracious  
Wi' secret favours, sweet and precious  
The Souter tauld his queerest stories,  
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus  
The storm without might rair and rustle,  
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.



Fergusson never achieved that brilliant combination of sympathetic humor, rich detail, varied movement, and pointed phrase, but he came near it, and Burns owed him a heavy debt he was ever quick to acknowledge.

For Burns, like that other famous country boy, from Stratford village, accepted as models the successful work of others, and then garnished his own poetry with shrewder understanding, and richer humor and imagination, and, greatest of all, with a masterly grasp and authoritative language that gives it a continued vitality when the models are faded and forgotten. And, unlike Shakespeare's, Burns' work breathes a striking and buoyant personality, which is perhaps its greatest charm. We must remember all this when we come to estimate his achievement. Moreover, we must come to see that Burns was no heaven-taught ploughman or isolated phenomenon. And though, like the Romantics, he absorbed contemporary sentimentalism with its doctrine of man's individual dignity and rights, and though he wrote personal poetry of rich emotional content, the most fruitful criticism of his work can come from regarding him not as a "Romantic" at all, but as the last great figure of the earthy, raw, and not infrequently bawdy Scots Vernacular Tradition.

By a curious paradox, however, if one seeks in Burns that tradition at its best, uncontaminated by eighteenth-century formal diction and by sentimentalism, he will savor it most fully in poems for which Burns found few direct hints—in his satires, particularly "Holy Willie's Prayer," and in his verse tale, "Tam o' Shanter." There, and in the "recitatives" of "The Jolly Beggars," free from personalities and class consciousness, Burns has embroidered brilliant description and colorful, dramatic narrative with broad and gusty humor, in the fullest extension of his powers and the widest expression of his genius.

"Tam o' Shanter" stands unique in Burns and in our literature, and it is easily one of the few great poems of its century. Its humor, and rapid variety of scene, and vivid detail, and the compelling sweep and zest of the story make it so wholly delightful that comment but stales its infinite variety. It must be read and heard. And of Burns' satire it must be said that in no other English or Scotch satirist with Burns' keen eye and deadly thrust, is there the same overwhelming good humor and almost sympathy with the victim. Dr. Hornbook, the village quack (whom, later, by the way, Burns helped with a substantial loan), is laughed down with a burst of friendly derision that completely destroys him, and yet did not destroy his friendship with Burns. Similarly in his "Address to the Deil," Burns jokes the Devil completely out of his Calvinist Hell, which, he says, is no place even for a Devil. But greatest of all is "Holy Willie's Prayer," that "amazing achievement in satire—so nice, so exquisite in detail, so overwhelming in effect," in which Willie's outraged conscience seeks divine consolation for indignities suffered as God's vicar in Mauchline parish.<sup>1</sup>

For those who find this side of Burns not to their taste, there are his songs in which they will find what they almost certainly want, sentiment. The deliberate appeal to emotions, with conscious artifice and distortion of values, was

<sup>1</sup> An aftermath of this pious event deserves to be better known. Upon the authority of Thomas Kennedy, who had become his fellow townsman in Cortland, New York, Henry S. Randall, in *The Knickerbocker* of March, 1896, relates how Burns revealed to Willie that his prayer had been overheard. Urged by Burns, Kennedy invited Willie to enjoy "a bit o' satire" on a distinguished local elder, on condition he should hear it through without speaking. The victim accepted with a relish that was heightened by the first few stanzas, but by the seventh he broke his promise and roared, "That blackguard Burns!", and at the eighth, rushed from the room, exclaiming, "That blackguard Burns!—he'll go to hell—he'll go to hell!"

a sophisticated element in eighteenth-century literature that seduced Burns' "skinless sensibility." Too often his sentiment is false and forced, or, what is worse, it is a self-conscious savoring of itself. Even such widely and deservedly popular poems as those to a mouse and to a mountain daisy reek with overcharged benevolence and carefully calculated appeals to our tender feelings; and they both close on a note of conscious self-pity. Moreover, we should note the essential falseness of Burns' feeling any mouse his "poor earth-born companion an' fellow mortal," and particularly *his* comparing the daisy's fate to that

of artless maid,  
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!  
By love's simplicity betray'd,  
And guileless trust;  
Till she, like thee, all soil'd is laid  
Low i' the dust.

Pious humanitarianism, embellished with vivid detail, is still popular, and the line between sentiment and sentimentality is not sharp, but a comparison of these poems with "The Twa Dogs" or "The Auld Farmer's New-Year Morning Salutation to his Auld Mare, Maggie" reveals at once the difference between warm human feeling delicately caught, and pumped-up, artificial display.

If one wishes, he can find in Burns, particularly in the songs, sentiment that is true and clear and fine and tender. For instance, the varieties of love—a girl's shyness, her difficulty in deciding between two lovers, her hopeful and desperate faith in her lover just before her baby is to be born, her meditating proper decorum on meeting a lad while comin' thro' the rye, all these and many more he catches perfectly. Drinking songs, humorous songs, pathetic songs, patriotic songs—he has left superb examples of

them all. And he furnished the English-speaking world with its universal, if not always understood, song to celebrate old times remembered, old friendships renewed, and present friends and pleasures to be cherished. The tune and at least some of the words of "Auld Lang Syne" are as familiar to all of us as our beds. And perhaps this would have been the achievement most pleasing to Burns.

For he was one of the few men of his time who took a serious interest in the folk songs of Scotland. In his travels, on his excise rounds, by correspondence, and through every means open to him, he made heroic efforts to collect all the songs of his country and to find or compose decent words for them. And it should be remembered that Burns wrote his words to music and intended them to be sung. He came at a time when popular native songs were fast disappearing either into limbo or the collections of antiquarians, and had it not been for him they might well have died altogether. As it was, he fitted fragments together, built new songs around a phrase or stanza, revised here and retouched there, until single-handed he had literally restored Scots song to life, and had left at least two score of the finest lyrics in the world.

And this during years when he was working at the uncongenial excise, when his society was either patronizing country gentry or small-town tradesmen and worse, when his health was failing, and when his hopes were dimming for a comfortable living and time for poetry while he still had poetry in him. Conscious that for him brilliant prospects had opened only briefly, and had not been fulfilled, he knew his genius and the driving energy behind it had largely wasted themselves away, nor was the knowledge comforting, and he sought consolation where he could find it.

Finally, however, careless living and hard work, particularly the latter, caught up with him, and his heart, early overstrained, showed signs of failure. Much enfeebled by a long illness, his wife expecting a baby, his debts pressing him, his death fairly certain in his own mind, Burns took the advice of his doctors and went to the seaside for a rest, and for "seabathing," in the hope that he would improve. The place he went to was no gay resort with a bright, sandy beach, but a remote hamlet on a bleak and sedgy shore of the Solway Firth. And there, removed from his friends and family, almost entirely alone, Burns sat day after day under a hawthorne tree and saw his strength gradually slip away. Each afternoon he waded out until the cold water came up to his armpits, and then waded back to sit under the hawthorne again and think of his daily more apparent end. And, after he had become entirely certain the end was not far off, he climbed wearily into a carriage and was driven back to Dumfries.

His friends at once came to see him, and were shocked at the evident nearness of his death. One of them wrote another.

"My dear Cunningham

I wrote you last Sunday and mentioned that our friend Burns was very ill—I conceive it to be a task (you would not forgive me did I omit it) to mention now, that I believe it is all over with him. I am this minute come from the mournful chambers in which I have seen the expiring genius of Scotland departing with Burns. Dr Maxwell told me yesterday he had no hopes—today the hand of death is visibly fixed upon him. I cannot dwell on the scene—It overpowers me—yet Gracious God were it in thy power to recover him! He had life enough to acknowledge me—and

Mrs Burns said he had been calling on you and me continually—He made a wonderful exertion when I took him by the hand—with a strong voice he said, 'I am much better today,—'I shall be soon well again for I command my spirits & my mind But yesterday I resigned myself to death'—Alas it will not do—"

And it did not do. Within two days Burns was dead. Dumfries gave him a fine funeral, his friends got up a subscription for the widow, and his critics began a chorus that still continues. But to most of us now, "it is history that, while there was an infinite deal of the best sort of good in Burns, the bad in him, being largely compacted of such purely unessential defects as arrogance, petulance, imprudence, and a turn for self-indulgence, this last exasperated by the conditions in which his lot was cast, was not of the worst kind after all"<sup>2</sup> Yet these more vivid qualities have obscured his generous family loyalty, his responsibility as a husband and his affectionate concern as a father, his sturdy acceptance of inevitable hard work and distasteful duties, his patriotism, his quixotic honesty and integrity, and his abhorrence of cant and pettiness. But however the emphasis is laid, Burns' life stands before us as by no means an ignoble passage redeemed by genius. And it is ever more clear that John Syme's vision was prophetic when he saw "the expiring genius of Scotland departing with Burns"

<sup>2</sup> W. E. Henley, "Robert Burns: Life, Genius, Achievement," *Centenary Burns* (London and Edinburgh, 1896), Vol. IV

## The Significance of the Manuscripts

*James Grierson and Joseph Train*—"Grierson is a curious old fellow.—He has been an enthusiastic collector of such matters connected with Burns for upwards of 20 years—during which time he has repeatedly visited the various places of the Poet's residences"<sup>3</sup> So wrote Joseph Train in 1828 of one who had given him information about Burns which he was forwarding to John Lockhart<sup>4</sup> But partly because some of the stories in Train's memorandum were scandalous, and partly because "Grierson" was not identified further, the Train MS has remained unjustly suspect

<sup>3</sup> Train MS, *post*

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Train, native of Ayrshire, Supervisor of Customs at Dumfries and later at Castle Douglas, antiquarian, and friend of Sir Walter Scott, was an obvious person for John Lockhart to consult, perhaps through his father-in-law, about his *Life of Burns*. Whatever the medium, early in Chapter IX he acknowledges information just received, an obvious reference to the Train MS, ten sheets, 7½ x 9¾ in., written on one side, and now in the Library of the University of Edinburgh. Lockhart says, "Since the first pages of this narrative were sent to the press, I have heard from an old acquaintance of the bard, who often shared his bed with him at Mossiel, that even at that early period, it was his custom to have a great tub of water by his bedside." (*Life of Robert Burns*, Edinburgh, 1828 Vol. xxiii, of *Constable's Miscellany*)

However, recently uncovered notes<sup>5</sup> of James Grierson of Dalgoner<sup>6</sup> show him to have been the Grierson who supplied Train with material gleaned from reliable witnesses.<sup>7</sup> Much of it came from John Richmond, Burns' crony in 1786, 1787, and 1788, but he was by no means the only source. Those mentioned in the notes include John Blanc, farm servant at Mossgiel; John Lambie, once Burns' ploughboy, one Hepburn of Kilmainock, a friend of Tam Samson; "Mr. Carfrae, Printer, son of Mrs Carfrae, Upper Baxter's Close Edinr with whom Richmond and Burns lodged"; David Sillar, Robert Ainslie, Agnes McLehose (Clarinda), A C McLehose, W S, her son; and Mrs. James Anderson, Highland Mary's sister. Moreover, it is highly probable that these were not all, and that not all of Grierson's notes are now included in the papers at the Register House, for both Grierson and Train<sup>8</sup> mention items no longer to be found

Conscientious but unsystematic, Grierson made his notes in a minute, ill-written hand on any convenient piece of paper, and seldom transcribed them. Ranging from mere scraps to full sheets, his papers are a chaotic mixture of items copied or clipped from newspapers, reports of interviews with those who had known Burns, drafts and proofs of letters to the editor, accounts of various affairs unconnected with Burns, transcripts of Burns' poems and letters,

<sup>5</sup> These notes are now in the custody of Mr William Angus, Keeper of the Registers and Records of Scotland, H M Register House, Edinburgh, to whom I am indebted for the identification of their author

<sup>6</sup> Near Dunscoic, Dumfriesshire

<sup>7</sup> Only five items (the "sonsie lass," Holy Willie, Farm of Mossgiel, The Armour's and Burns' Marriage), about which Train himself may have had personal information, are either unattributed to Grierson or without originals in the notes

<sup>8</sup> Train MS, *post*, at the end, and reference to "The Trogger," Grierson Papers, IV



and miscellaneous intelligence. Because most of the entries are scrupulously dated, it is possible to arrange them in chronological order, which reveals a sharp stimulation of Grierson's interest in 1814, followed by a period of active inquiry, especially in Ayrshire in 1817. In 1829 and 1830, after his connection through Train with Lockhart's Life, Grierson called upon Clarinda and her son, and Robert Ainslie.

What are the results for us of the Laird of Dalgoner's interest in Burns? A group of anecdotes, a glimpse of Burns' mother, two minor poems, a considerable body of information about his associates and contemporaries, the circumstances surrounding the composition of "To a Haggis," new light on the quarrel with Creech, and the most direct link with Highland Mary on record, these are surely no inconsiderable addition to our knowledge at this late date.

*The Young and Hope Manuscripts.*—Despite his evident Tory primness, Alexander Young, of Harburn, W S, was a shrewd observer whose lively and varied recollections of Burns and Burns' contemporaries have too long remained in manuscript.<sup>9</sup> In addition to his account of Burns, perhaps the greatest interest lies in his remarks on Dr Currie's opinion of Burns, and in those on William Nicol, Robert Riddell, Robert Heron, Lord Monboddo and his daughter, and John Syme, and also in his further evidence of Allan

<sup>9</sup> Both the Young and Hope manuscripts are now in the library of the University of Edinburgh. I owe my identifications and the photo-stats from which I have worked to the kindness of the Librarian, Mr Lauriston Sharp. Young's rough draft fills both sides of twenty-five sheets 12 x 7½ in., his fair copy both sides of fifteen sheets the same size, his notes on Cunningham's eighth volume, beginning on the reverse of the last sheet of the fair copy, both sides of five more, and his account of the circumstances of the memoir three additional sides. The Hope memoir fills eleven sides of the same size.

Cunningham's editorial casualness. The present text is that of Young's fair copy, supplemented by variants and deletions from his rough draft, referred to as "r.d."<sup>10</sup> Both versions exhibit many discreet deletions.

The Hope memoir supplements Young's, and gives further light on upper-class opinion of Burns. It was written by the Right Honorable Charles Hope, later Lord Granton.

<sup>10</sup> His rough draft is dated 1834, and his fair copy, "Notes on Robert Burns omitted or Improved," 1835. This "principal Extended Copy [was] sent to Mr J. G. Lockhart by Mr Cadell" on May 16, 1837.



**II**

**THE GRIERSON PAPERS**



## II

### THE GRIERSON PAPERS

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#### Grierson's Notes of 1805

The earliest marks of Grierson's interest in Burns are the items below, collected in 1805

A Part of a letter,<sup>1</sup> docketed "Burns to Bailly Hill Edinr" and "got from Mr Stewart & compd with Bailly Hill's original 22 June 1805."<sup>2</sup>

What are you doing & how are you doing Have you lately seen any of my few friends—What is become of the Borough reform etc<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ferguson, 387, II, 6 Peter Hill was assistant to Creech, Burns' publisher "Mr Stewart" was probably Thomas Stewart the Glasgow publisher, who in 1799 brought out "The Jolly Beggars" and other poems in a series of weekly tracts, and in 1801 collected them in a volume

<sup>2</sup> On the reverse of this letter is Grierson's note "Miss Burns, Matthews, was from Durham, her house was in Rose St in the neighborhood of Lord Stonefield in her house was a Riot one night at which Lord S daughters took offense and raised a process to have her removed but decided, after being moved to the Court of Session in her favour, 12 Dec 1789 see Edin Mag 1789 p 88" The lady had originally been brought before Magistrate Creech, who gave her a severe sentence

<sup>3</sup> Here a gap in the MS, filled with these notes "Roshin, Durham Ld Swinton See Edin Mag v 10 Monthly Register p 86 see Reliques 102 Elliesland 2 Feb 1790"

How is the fate of my poor name sake Mle Burns decided? Which of their Grave Lordships can lay his hand on his heart & say—that he has not taken the advantage of such frailty? Nay if we may judge by near 6m years experience—can the world do without such Frailty—Oh Man! but for the (*sic*) & thy selfish appetites & dishonest artifices—that beauteous form—& that once innocent & still ingenious (*sic*) Mind Might have shone conspicuous & lovely in the faithful wife & the affectionate Mother, & shall the unfortunate sacrifice to thy pleasures—have no claim to thy humanity!! As for those flinty bosom'd puritan[c] prosecutors of female frailty & persecutors of female charms

I am quite sober—I am dispassionate—to shew you that I am so—I shall mend my pen ere I proceed.

It is written "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" so I shall neither say God curse them nor God blast them—nor God damn them—but May woman blast them—May woman curse & damn them<sup>4</sup> May her lovely hand inexorably shut—the portal of Rapture to their most earnest prayers & fondest essays for entrance, and when many years & much port & great business—have delivered them over to Vulture Gouts & Aspen Palsies—*then* may the dear bewitching charmer—in derision, throw open the blessed<sup>5</sup> gate—to tantalize their impotent desires—which like ghosts haunt their bosoms—When all their powers to give or receive enjoyment are forever asleep in the Sepulchres of their fore fathers<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ferguson, "May Woman curse them! May Woman blast them! May Woman damn them!"

<sup>5</sup> Ferguson, "blissful"

<sup>6</sup> Ferguson, "fathers" Grierson adds, "The cause was finally given in favour of Miss Burns"

B. Three poems and three fragments.<sup>7</sup>

## 1. on a dog of Lord Eglintons

I never barked when out of season  
I never bit without a reason  
I ne'er insulted weaker brother  
Nor wronged by force or fraud another  
We brutes are placed a rank below  
Happy for man could he say so <sup>8</sup>

2 To the Memory of the Unfortunate Miss Burns  
1791

Like to a fading flower in May  
Which Gardner cannot save  
So Beauty must, sometime, decay  
And drop into the grave

Fair Burns for long the talk and toast  
Of many a gaudy Beau  
That Beauty has forever lost  
What made each bosom glow.

Think fellow sisters on her fate  
Think, think how short her days  
Oh! think & e'er it be too late  
Turn from your evil ways

Beneath this cold green sod lies dead  
That once bewitching dame  
That fired Edina's lustful sons  
And quench'd their glowing flame.

<sup>7</sup> Items 3, 4, and 6 are by Burns, the lines to Miss Burns are directly ascribed to him in the Train MS, and the Epigram on Lord Eglinton's Dog is in the style and spirit of "versicles" he was fond of producing. The Eglinton estate was a few miles from Mauchline, and a member of the family was one of Mary Campbell's patrons.

<sup>8</sup> The position of these lines, just below the letter to Hill and opposite a transcription of Stanza IV of "A Bard's Epitaph," suggests they were an additional, authentic tidbit offered Grierson by either Hill or Stewart.



- 3        No more of your titled acquaintances boast  
           Nor of the gay groups you have seen  
       A crab louse is but a crab louse at last  
           Tho' stick to the        of a Queen.
- 4        Three lawyers' tongues turned inside out,  
           Wi' lies seamed like a beggar's clout,  
       Three Priest's hearts, rotten black as muck  
           Lay stinking, vile, in every neuk.<sup>9</sup>
- 5        Lo worms enjoy the seat of bliss  
           Where Lords & Lairds afore did kiss
- 6        Stanza IV of "A Bard's Epitaph"

### Notes of 1814-1817

A decade later, as Grierson read through Currie's Life, he jotted down forty-three queries,<sup>10</sup> largely about the identity of persons Burns knew or mentioned, and he must have secured most of the answers he recorded from John Richmond and others interviewed in the years subsequent to his reading Currie. Grierson's notes on Currie are interesting only for their date, June 4, 1814, which marks the fruitful revival of his interest in Burns that prompted the visits and interviews recorded below.

<sup>9</sup> Ornaments of the "haly table" later removed by Burns. H&H I, 440

<sup>10</sup> The form of one, "What do you know of him," suggests Grierson was addressing someone (probably his correspondent, Richmond), but answers to several include references to pages in Currie where he obviously found the information himself. Although accurate, the fifteen answers Grierson set down, all but one connected with Ayrshire, add nothing to our knowledge and are omitted. Identification of Mrs. Meriy (the heroine of "corn Rigs") and Mrs. Dunlop reappear in the Train MS.

A. Memorandum<sup>11</sup> of a conversation with John Blane.

Glasgow 15 June 1814

John Blane, (now driver of the Lord Nelson Coach from Kilmk to Cumnock) was farm servant to Burns during a part of his Lease of Mossgiel—as they slept during the night together he had opportunities of observing (*sic*) the Poet in all circumstances—

J. B. sat beside Burns in church on the day when the Incident occurred (*sic*) wh gave occasion to the Poem of the Louse, & was surprized when Burns awakened him, the middle of the same night, & repeated to him all the stanzas, requesting his opinion of them,—this was the most surprizing Proofs of the facility with which Burns composed, that Came within J B's Knowledge—

In the laborious employment of husbandry, the Peculiarities of Burn's (*sic*) mind were easily discernable—While engaged in Thrashing, it was evident that his mind was particularly occupied, from the varied alternations from slow to quick wh rendered it dangerous & even impossible for another to Keep time with him but in an hour or two he was quite exhausted & gave in altogether —

A simple occurrence commented on by Burns in his own commanding way, has never since failed to Impress this persons mind, in regard to Cruelty to animals When walking together, J. B having a whip in his hand, gave a slight touch of it at a sparrow, & deprived it of some of its feathers—Upon this occasion Burns made so solemn an appeal to his Conscience, upon the unnecessary & wanton barbarity of the action that he has Ever since been Influenced by his admonition to resist similar Temta-

<sup>11</sup> Occupying a single sheet, with Stanza IV of "A Bard's Epitaph" below it

tions (*sic*)—Burns uniformly digested & arranged his Compositions mentally, before he committed them to paper—

B. Memoranda docketed "Notes<sup>12</sup> Machline 15 Aug 1817, by John Richmond, writer."

Mrs. Carfrae<sup>13</sup> upper Baxter's close Burns & Rich-  
[Land Market mond Lodgings  
North side Land Market west side 1787  
John Lambie,<sup>14</sup> Thatcher, Stevenson, led the Plough  
when Burns turned up the mouse.

Simpson, Schoolmaster Cumnock, wrote the poem to Burns in the name of a Taylor at Ochiltree "ye lousy bitch to thrash my Back at *sic* a pitch"<sup>15</sup>

C. A proof or offprint with some corrections in Grierson's hand and three additional notes, also in his hand

To the Editor of the Glasgow Chronicle  
Sir:

I have been told and for many years believed, that our great poet Burns was born where the cottage now stands in

<sup>12</sup> Many have no connection with Burns There is a group on extraordinary feats of memory, another group on "Mimickry," and one note on an excellent treatment for razor straps The notes here quoted are interesting chiefly because they reappear in the Train MS, and because they illustrate Grierson's habit of following up his leads carefully Items B, D, and E, with other, unrelated matter, fill both sides of a sheet

<sup>13</sup> Grierson later called on Mrs Carfrae's son

<sup>14</sup> Grierson also called on Lambie

<sup>15</sup> A visit to David Sillar on the way to Mauchline is recorded just below this note on Simpson "13 [August] Called on Dav Sillar, Irvine, 'a brother poet' he read over his sermon & various pieces of his manuscript poetry, he read from a slate, part of a reply he was preparing to a letter from me requesting a history of himself & Misfortunes his brother from whom he had large succession was in partnership with Mr Henderson & Sillar from Oikney in an African house Walker in a rope making & "

which a painting of him is exhibited, the property of the Shoemakers of Ayr, and about a mile distant from that town.

But lately I have been assured that this was not the fact, that he was born while his father resided at Doonholmgate, and was gardiner (*sic*) to Provost Wm Fergusson of Doonholm; and that he did not build the far famed cottage till several summers after the birth of Robert This I find confirmed by a poetic Taylor, who says he made our great poet's first short clothes, and also by one of his earliest friends now in life, and if we may judge by some of Burns' letters, not yet printed, or likely soon to be printed, one of the most attached, and, upon looking into his life, Currie's edition, p 37, himself says, "for the first six or seven years of my life my father was gardener to a worthy gentleman of small estate in the neighbourhood of Ayr," but, still as these two places are not far distant it is possible the place where the painting is exhibited may be the true place of his birth. The probability is against it . . .

[There follows a plea for the desirability of settling this disputed point]

Cairnensis, Dumfriesshire, Aug 1817

1st Note At Mauchline, Dumfries, etc the particular room and inn are yet pointed out where Burns wrote such and such a poem, as the Poacher Court was wrote in the east room, upstairs, of Murray's Inn, Mauchline, formerly John Dows.

2d While Burns was thrashing, etc his companions had often much difficulty to keep pace with him, for he was often either slow or very quick, according to the state of his mind, his violence soon exhausted him, when he threw himself on the straw quite worn out.

3rd When Burns was in Edinburgh, 1787, attending the first edition of his poems there he was asked to be of a party; he thought it was for the purpose of exhibiting, answered that he would, on condition they had also the learned pig present. The performance of this animal was then exhibited in Edinburgh for money.

#### D. Miscellaneous Notes<sup>16</sup>

Oct. 1817

Tam Sampson was a Nursery man at Kilmarnock where that business was carried to a greater extent than perhaps any where else, Edinburgh not exempted, as Ayrshire may witness, there having been more policy put down and trees planted than in any county of Scotland.

18 Oct 1817 Hepburn, Nursery man K—says he knew him well, he was a man of rough manners but of a heart fraught with the milk of human kindness he was told of such a neighbour who prayed regularly—Well says he "I pray none & my Corn grows as well as his"

His sons are Thomas nursery & seed man Kilmarnock

William Merchant do

John

When Tam son John was thought dying at Ochiltree—Rev Mr Grant visited him—& thinking him an infidel said he would return & hoped to awaken his conscience. Awaken my conscience exclaimed John, you may as well fire a cannon at a dead man's arse as think to awaken my conscience.

Wm Tannahill, Ardrossan<sup>17</sup>

Lambie, Thatcher, Stevenston Ayrshire says he led the Plough when Burns turned up on Lochlie the Mouse—it

<sup>16</sup> In October Grierson continued his tour of Ayrshire, visiting Kilmarnock, Stevenston, and Ardrossan. See also note 12 above.

<sup>17</sup> Grierson here notes the name of someone to call on later.

had an uncommonly large nest. Next day while he was composing the Poem on the mouse, he was driving & unloading two [two (deleted)] carts, earth & lime, which his brother & and (*sic*) another man filled from a heap at a distance—so absorbed was he Burns that one time he forgot to unload one of the Carts and returned it with its load to the heap, not much to the pleasure of his Brother Burns was an excellt Plow & workman but when under the Influence of the Poetic fever [*fervour?*], not steady—then he was silent with his lips frequently in motion So good natured that his boys directed him rather than he the boys. That night he 'brought the Partrick to the ground'<sup>18</sup> *he told* Lambie he was going to see his lass and I. followed him to Betty Patons on a neighbour farm.

When residing at Lochlea—————Agnes Brown, his mother, had been to visit a child that was dying in the neighbourhood—when she returned she said to her son Rab you should have been there—you never heard such a prayer as James Lee gave beside the poor child—he replied oh mother! Can you or Jamie Lee be so daft as to think that his prayer can be of any service to the dying Bairn or keep the devil at a distance or that God would send a child to the world to Damn it On this his mother lifted the tongs to strike him with but he made his escape

Tanahill joiner Ardrossan when a little boy, was employed by Rot Bowie after mercht Kilmarnock to go to Mossiel & desire Bell Burns to go out to speak to him. This he had

<sup>18</sup> "Epistle to Rankine," H&H I, 178 Lambie's recollections do not coincide with the facts Burns himself dates the turning up of the mouse as November, 1785, when he was living at Mossiel Betty Paton's child was born May 22, 1785, and was therefore conceived in 1784 when Burns was living at Mossiel Just when he began to visit her is uncertain, but it was probably while she was a servant at Lochlie, from which the Burns moved in the spring of 1784 Lambie's assigning a particular night is either naive or presumptuous

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done repeatedly, & stoped (*sic*) some times a while in the kitchen till Bell returned. he would not tell his name but said he came from Stewarton—once he met her mother at the door who cried into the house, 'Bell here's the Stewarton boy wanting you again—what the plague can he be ay wanting with you—his Breeches would not be mittens to a plowman. She had been a woman of some humor. he was some times sitting near to Bowie & Bell and when anything droll occurred in conversation—Bell would very readily turn it into meter—Bowie had not succeeded in his courtship of her & never married.

#### E. Memorandum on Highland Mary.<sup>19</sup>

1817 24 Oct Met with Campbell spouse to James Anderson mason in Ardrossan 1817 and sister to Highland Mary Burns friend. She says Mary was tall, fair haird with blue eyes—they were daughters of Arch. Campbell mariner who resided at Dunoon Parish & Agnes Campbell his spouse, he died in Greenock 1815 & is buried in a lair of the new burying (*sic*) ground he bought from widow McPherson & his widow lives there in Scots land long vennial. Their sons are Robert & Archd Carpenters there—Mrs Andersons sons possess the Bible Burns gave her in exchange—it is printed by Alexander Kincaids assignies (*sic*) at Edin 1782 The book sellers mark 5/6 2 vol small 12° on each vol is his mason mark <sup>20</sup> this son a mason works presently in Paisley. Mrs A says her sister was buried in the old kirk ground Greenock, the new burying ground was not then begun & that widow McPherson & others

<sup>19</sup> See my "Burns' Highland Mary," *PMLA*, LII, 3, also Train MS, *post*.

<sup>20</sup> Given in the margin thus



know the place—during the fever she was insensible.<sup>21</sup> Mrs. A showed the Bible to J. G. which she sent to Paisley to her son for, on purpose—on the first vol is in Burns hand writing 'And ye shall not swear by my name falsely'—'I am the LORD' 'Levit 19 Chap 12 verse' his name had been there but carefully rubbed (*sic*) out except some letters

On the second vol there is also wrote in his hand 'Thou shalt not for swear thy self but shalt perform unto the Lord thine Oath' 'Matth' 35 Ch 33 verse On this vol had also been the mason mark & his name with date 1786. but papers had been pasted on & torn off so the writing is much defaced.

Leaves are folded in at or near various places as Isaiah 30 & 21. 34 & 10. 43 & 17 55 & 16 [or 17 or 19] Jerem: x27.<sup>22</sup> 31 & 5. Ezek 18 36 & 33 Hosca 4th 11 & 8 Zach 13 Luke 17 & 14 John 13 & 14 20 & 7 Rev 4 & 10

It seems evident that those two texts wrote at length in his hand, each *only* part of a verse & inscribed one in each vol. given to mary were intended strongly to alude (*sic*) to some secret known to them alone & it is more than probable this was some promise or Oaths he has not Oaths as in the original but *Oath* & he was not one of these men who had no meaning for what they did.—probably it was her who erased the name, conscious too of the meaning and not chusing to have the books in her possession on which were the texts connected with the name<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Grierson's marginal note "Except the last day of her life when her father asked if she knew where she was Yes, she said, I am on my bridal bed She died in the house of her uncle Alex Campbell, Greenock Her grandfather was tenant to Duke of Argyle but lost his farm rather than let his sons go into the army"

<sup>22</sup> Doubtful, it may be x & 7, or possibly simply Jerem 7, and perhaps Jerem 1 & 7

<sup>23</sup> While too much should not be made of the passages marked in Mary's Bible, "Isaiah 30 & 21 34 & 10" repeats the theme of the quo-



F. Further Notes<sup>24</sup> on Highland Mary

The mason mark of Robert Burns from the Pocket Bible, 1 vol exchanged with Mary Campbell <-X-<

Highland Mary from Dunoon Parish Cowal The following words are from the same vol "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely—I am the Lord Lev 19th Chap 12 verse

Robert Burns, Mossgiel had been wrote with his own hand on another blank leaf, but is carefully rubbed out except some letters

On the second vol

Thou shall not forswear thyself but perform unto the Lord thine oath

Matth 5 ch 33 verse

G A letter addressed to "James Grierson Esqr of Dalgomer," in John Richmond's hand, and signed by him,

tations from Leviticus and Matthew inscribed on the flyleaves of the Bible, "Jerem 31 & 5" possibly refers to Burns' plan for taking Mary with him to the West Indies, and "Ezek 18" suggests repentance and forgiveness "Hosea 4th 11 & 8," "Zach 13," "Luke 17 & 14," and "Rev 4 & 10" have a marked flavor of the Armour episode and its aftermath In "John 13 and 14" there may be a reference to the famous ceremony of parting between Burns and Mary Perhaps the greatest interest and puzzle of these references is their preservation by Mary's family

<sup>24</sup> Written on a sheet containing a copy in Grierson's hand of "Rob Rhyme's earnest cry and Prayer to the Right Honble & Honble the Scotch Representatives in the House of Commons 1785-6" Except in one line, Grierson's text differs only in minor details of spelling and punctuation from the text of H&H based on two MSS and the Kilmarnock edition The important variant is in line 4, stanza xxvii, Grierson reads "Their fields & groves" instead of "The scented groves" The poem is docketed, "Copied by Mr John Richmond writer from Alex Cairfrae Printer Anchor Close 22 August 1817" This may be the source of the clue Grierson followed in seeking out Mrs Anderson, whom he saw two days later

giving the circumstances surrounding the composition of "To a Haggis."

Sir:

As you expressed a wish to know the occasion that gave rise to Burns poem on the Haggis, It was the following as nearly as I can remember.

A party of Friends annually (*sic*) for some years met at the House of David Shaw in Craigie Kirkdyke in the end of Harvest, and a sheeps haggis being presented it was called the Haggis Club.

At the meeting 1785 were present

Matthew Dickie writer in Edinburgh

William Paterson writer Kilmarnock

William Brown writer there

James Neil writer Ayr, of Shaws or Barnweil

Alexander Walker writer Edinr

Robert Burns &c

About eight days previous to the meeting A. Walker engaged Burns to meet him alone at Craigie Kirkdyke, where they should dine upon a Haggis—The novelty (*sic*) of Dining on a Haggis was much the Conversation at the engagement and on the Munday (*sic*) following He told me he had prepared an adress (*sic*) to the Haggis, On the Saturday following I accompanied Burns to Craigie Kirkdyke And was much surprised at meeting with so large a company,—At Dinner it was hinted to Matt Dickie the preses to ask Burns to Say the Grace He rose up, and prefaced by saying He would address the (*sic*) by the Lord And repeated the Address to the Haggis, there was no laughing in the Company every one thought that it was composed Extempore but the Poet told them, He came

prepared for the Haggis but not for the Company, It was  
a Hearty Jovial meeting I am your

Humbl Svt

John Richmond

Writer

Mauchline 17 Decr 1817

H. Transcript, in Grierson's hand, of a letter<sup>25</sup> from  
Burns to John Richmond

My dear Richmond

I am all impatience to hear of your fate, since the old  
confounder of right & wrong has turned you out of place  
by his journey to answer his indictment at the Bar of the  
other world.—He will find the Practice of that Court so  
different from the Practice in which he has for so many  
years been thoroughly hackney'd, that his friends, if he  
had any connection truly of that kind, which I rather  
doubt, may well tremble for his Sake.—

His Chicane, his left handed Wisdom, which stood so  
firmly by him to such good purpose *here*, like other accom-  
plices in robbery and plunder, will, now the piratical busi-  
ness is blown, in all probability turn King's evidence, and  
then—The Devil's bag piper will touch him of "Bundle  
and go" X If he has left you any Legacy, I beg your pardon  
for all this, if not, I know you will swear to every word I  
have said about him.

I have lately been rambling over by Dunbarton & In-  
verary; and running a drunken race on the side of Loch

<sup>25</sup> Ferguson 119, I, 100 This transcript was certainly secured from  
Richmond himself and it is, therefore, the best authority for the text  
of this letter, since neither the original nor a draft is now known.  
A collation with the published text reveals one important variant,  
the phrase "let me know of course" is given in Grierson's MS as "let  
me know by Connel," a preferable reading Connel was the carrier  
between Mauchline and Edinburgh

Lomond with a wild Highland man, his horse which had never known the ornaments of iron or leather zigzagged across before my old spavin'd hunter whose name is Jenny Geddes, and down came the Highland man horse & all, and down came Jenny and my Bardship, so I have got such a Skinful of bruises & wounds that I shall at least be four weeks before I dare venture on my Journey to Edinburgh.—

Not one new thing under the sun has happened in Mauchline since you left it.—I hope this will find you as comfortably situated as formerly, or, if Heaven please, more so; but, at all events, I trust you will let me know by Connel how matters stand with you, well or ill.

Tis but poor consolation to tell the world when matters go wrong, but, you know very well your connection & mine stands on a very different footing.—

I am ever  
my dear friend  
yours

Robt Burns

Mossgiel 7 July  
1787

X William Wilson W S died June 1787 aged 98. He had that morning wrote a suspension with his own hand which J Richmond presented next day to Lord Braxfield who said what hocus pocus is this I had a note this morning of his death [Grierson's note]

#### I. Notes<sup>26</sup> on William Creech

I have settled matters greatly to my satisfaction with Mr Creech—he is certainly not what he should be, nor has he given me what

<sup>26</sup> On a mere scrap, one side contains the first item, a tracing headed "Facsimile Burns," from a letter, Ferguson, 315, l. 308, from Burns to his wife, below it is the anecdote, and on the reverse side the note of explanation

A person met Burns coming up Leith walk brandishing a sapling & with much violence in his face & manner, said, Burns what is the matter? I am going to smash that S Creech.

FacSimile of Part of a letter Burns to his wife & given by her to her sister in law Mrs Adam Armour, Machline. Mr Creech—Bookseller, and afterwards Lord Provost of Edinburgh subscribed for 500 copies of the edition of 1787 which Burns went to Edinr to print instead of going to Jamaica Creech on delivery refused to give more than the Booksellers price wh Burns thought taking the advantage of him after subscribing without restriction.

### Notes of 1829-1830

Grierson left no important records after 1817 until these<sup>27</sup> of the years 1829-1830.

A. Memorandum of a conversation with Claında, 1829

14-12-29

Called on Mrs McLehose a well looked little woman, plump, is 70 next birthday was married at 17 had 4 children one son only alive a W S born in five years when her husband went to Kingston Jamaica. She went there Feb 1792 and stoped (*sic*) only 3 months the heat was so excessive & mosquitos so anoying (*sic*)

Burns was last in Edin Dec 1791 and no more that she knew of—Jan End of 1787<sup>28</sup> that she was acquainted with him

<sup>27</sup> Item A occupies a single sheet, and item B another, item C shares a scrap with the name of a butcher, the price of beef, train schedules and fares, wages paid to gleaners, etc

<sup>28</sup> Really 1788

Her husband died 1812

Burns told her that his fame would be greater after death than in life.

She was much surprised that Burns should should (*sic*) designate his wife bonny who was so grime—told her that Mrs B' brother Adam said that it was not his sister he called bonny Jean but Jâne Lorimer of Kemys hall near Ellisland. She was Chloris & the lassie with the lint white locks.

She was born 1760 married 1777

The way the letters came to be published—a young man Finley, a literary person who died in early life at or near Lanark, asked for them to excerpt some parts into an acct. of Burns those parts she marked when to her great surprise the whole was published

Mrs Gray formerly of Edin<sup>20</sup> & after Belfast academy (*sic*) who died some years ago at Bombay, the last thing she had in hand was a vindication of Mrs McLehose from aspersions or suspicions with respect to Burns" (*sic*)

She went to Kingston Jamaica to her husband Feb 1792 & stoped (*sic*) scarce 3 months she was so much anoyed (*sic*) with muiskitos & the Climate<sup>30</sup> Burns in marrying Jean Armour behaved better than Jean could have expected—but B said in the situation she was and hurried out of doors by her father what could he do. Mrs Mac does not approve of the Posthumous monuments—they are idle & farsical (*sic*).

15 Dec.

Went to see the Jolly Beggars which Greenshields has embodied so admirably in stone, to be packed up for Edinr next day. Wrote to Clarinda to see them—[three words

<sup>20</sup> Burns' correspondent, Mary Peacock

<sup>30</sup> To say nothing of her husband's ebony mistress and mahogany children

illegible]. On passing from Lanark to Nethan waterfoot met many people returning from viewing this Groupe (*sic*) traveling by every sort of conveyance a Coach, Gigs, many Carts & horsemen & Multitudes on foot. Not less perhaps than a thousand per day from the various quarters and this for many days

*Jany 1831* Statue of Burns, after Taylor, exhibiting in Edinr.—by Greenshields.

B. Memorandum of a Conversation with Clarinda, 1830

Where e'er we go, whatever realms we see  
Our heart untraveled, fondly turns to thee England  
Goldsmith

Page 2 Col 9 London Weekly Times  
4 Nov 30

Whatever place, whatever land I see,  
My heart untravell'd fondly turns to Thee,  
Still to Clarinda turns—with Ceaseless pain,  
And drags at each remove, a lengthened chain<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> These lines not in Grierson's hand The following notes (on a sheet with "Burns grace at Kirkcudbright" and the anecdote of Jamie Todd (see *post*), and a debased version of "O, Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast") and draft of a letter (on a separate sheet) resulted from this interview with Clarinda

From Glasgow Herald of 12 Nov 30  
Burns looked into a room where some persons was enjoying themselves & was retiring when one of them called, come in Johnny Bopeep After it was proposed that he who wrote the best verse should be kept free when Burns wrote

Here I am Johnny Bopeep  
I saw three sheep  
And those three sheep saw me  
Half a crown apiece  
Will pay for their fleece  
And so Johnny Bopeep gets free

In the Dfrs Journal of 9 nov 30 It is said these lines were from Drummond and that Burns would not have borrowed them, but they did not know Burns who said so.

The above is part of a letter<sup>22</sup> subscribed, Sylvander, Burns, to Clarinda, Mrs McLehose, 1789, copied out for J. G. 24 Nov. 30 & partly read to him at same time by Clarinda.

Inter alia of much in the same style writes I have been to see a certain person, Jean Armour, but oh how insipid and disgusting compared to you.

When Clarinda heard of the marriage she was much shocked it was so utterly unexpected by her and so much at variance with what had passed—but for that she had

---

Drummond's lines on a similar occasion (sic) were

I bopeep  
Saw your four sheep  
And each of you his fleece  
The reckning is five shilling  
If each of you is willing  
Tis fifteen pence a piece

---

Goldsmith in Italy says of his country—

Where'er we go, whatever realms we see  
Our hearts, untravel'd, fondly turn to thee

Burns

Whatever plain, whatever land I see  
My heart, untraveled, fondly turns to thee,  
Still to Clarinda turns with ceaseless pain  
And drags at each remove, a lengthened chain

B does not seem quite at home when he borrows note the difference between the first two lines & the two last. Something like the following might apply to Clarinda

What ever face, what ever shapes I see,  
Improv'd in mind or dress as they may be  
My heart unwitched fondly turns to thee  
Still to Clarinda turns, with ceaseless pain  
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain

---

Mr Editor

In your journal of Nov 2 a correspondent censures the credulity of the Scotsman for admitting (sic) that Burns parodied the Johnny Bopeep of Drummond tho it is strictly in character with him in a time of jolity (sic) and tho' perhaps no one wit borrowed less, who



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not gone to the West Indies. She says 1790 Burns offered her a visit, which she declined as he was married.<sup>88</sup>

Also, For as unkindly as Jeans father had behaved to Burns, that when he returned from Edinr with his pockets full he was received very graciously and Jean & him locked into a room

Miss Nimmo—a friend of Peggy Chalmers Mrs——<sup>84</sup> introduced Clarinda to Burns.

C. Dinner with Robert Ainslie and A. C. McLehose, W. S

Burns, a stranger, was invited into a seat at Church by a Lady The text was the Terrors of the Gospel denouncing all sinners to hell the lady seemed attentive but agitated he wrote in the blank leaf of the bible wt a pencil

Fair maid, you need not take the hint,  
Nor idle texts pursue  
Twas only sinners that he meant  
Not angels such as you

wrote so much yet I have an other in my eye from a letter 1791 not printed and which it is likely never will be printed the one version is

Whatever plain, whatever land I see  
My heart untraveled fondly turns to theeX  
Goldsmith in Italy says of England  
Where'er I go, whatever realms I see  
My heart untravel'd fondly turns to the

X Still to turns, with ceaseless pain  
and drags at each remove a lengthened chain  
28 Dec '90

absence prevented this being sent sooner If the above is printed please throw of (sic) six casts which will be called & paid for

<sup>88</sup> Ferguson, 210, I, 194

<sup>84</sup> Cp Ferguson, 388, 389, II, 8 Clarinda made no reference to the visit Burns paid her in 1791, just before her departure for Jamaica

<sup>84</sup> Mrs Lewis Hav, properly identified in Train MS

Mr. Ainslie who accompanied Burns to Kelso told J. G. while dining with A C McLehose WS that his sister was the person these lines were addressed to.<sup>85</sup>

## Notes on Second Election Ballad

In the notes below, Grierson used his knowledge of local affairs to illustrate Burns' second election ballad <sup>86</sup>

"Notes to Burns election song Stewartry of Kirkcud 1795  
Mar 1816"

Verse 1. Murray of Broughton<sup>87</sup>

Rev Wm Nesbit Firth Parish, for adultery, imprisoned  
fed on bread & water 2 mos & banished

2. Muray (sic) p 5. 20

2. Gordon of Balmaighie—Grace Johnston of Carnsalloch  
mistress to Murray was niece to Gordon, his sister's  
daughter, & mother to the present Murrays—see notes  
to trogging by Burns<sup>88</sup> Wm Bushby went to India 1776  
returned 1786 died at Tinwald Downs 16 Aug 1813 In  
great horror<sup>89</sup> it was said—con] Miss Griz Maitland 1776  
3 John Bushby, writer & sheriff clerk in Dumfries who suc-  
ceeded the office [one word illegible] for £800

James Dickson Sh. Clerk who died Ap 1776 John was  
Bankrupt 1797 for £80,000 chiefly to the Douglas &  
Heron Bank which commenced 1769 & was Bankrupt in  
two years to the loss of more than £2000 each share to

<sup>85</sup> *Cp* H&H II, 433

<sup>86</sup> H&H, II, 193 & 403-5 *Cp* Young MS and Hope MS, *post*

<sup>87</sup> Grierson here compares the punishment of a poor clergyman with  
the immunity of a great man who had committed the same offense

<sup>88</sup> The "notes to trogging," that is to Burns' ballad "The Trogger,"  
are not among the present papers

<sup>89</sup> *Cp* Train MS, *post*

those who were able to stand. See Scots Mag 1789 p 204 X

X John M'Adam of C he opened a bank at Ayr 17 Octr 1763 who resigned in favour of Doug Heron & Co bank 1769 as did the bank at Dfs. DH&Co annuities redeemed 1774-106-1967 Scots Mag 1763-581 do 1773-668. Ayr Bank discontinued from 12 Aug 1773.

X John first married miss Newall of Barskeoch & Miss Maitland of Eccles

- 4 Kempleton's Birkie Wm youngest Brother to John Bushby, who got him in oposition (*sic*) to great intrest (*sic*) from Lord North & who applied for relations a writer's place in the East India company's Service & he returned in ten years with a large fortune, supposed by some uncharitable people, to have been partly Spoils from the ruin of that Bank, of which John was Director & chief agent his brother in law John McVitie teller for Dumfries and his brother Thomas Bushby of Ard [several letters illegible] & after collector of the customs at Kirkcudbt had the Contract for furnishing the bank with Gold & Silver.
- 5 John, son to sd John Bushby had lately been appointed sheriff of Wigton Sh and his brother Sheriff Clerk of Dumfries a Short time before his fathers death he obtained the Estate of Eccles after the death of his uncle Cap John Maitland After a very singular oposition (*sic*) from his aunts Miss maitland and Mrs D— [Dr?] Babington of the episcopal chapel Dfs the heirs at Law
6. Some read Maxwell of Cardoness others Gordon of Carleton
7. New Christening towns—Newton Stewart they got created a Burgh by the Name of Newton Douglass—& Castle

Douglass was formerly named Carlingwark & Casway and Sir Wm Douglass who died 22 Sep 1809 traveled through Galloway a chapman he once was swindled out of a knife on the road there—a Gentleman came past while he was weeping & gave him half a crown. this he told It was alledged (*sic*) they insured vessels to america & laid plans for their being taken. It was thought the Douglasses, so rich, were fond of paying their respects to Lord Galloway.

When John Anderson of Finny [?] bought the Estate of Lord Barrymore Sir Wm was the only man he could find able to advance the money to him.

- 7 8 Gordon of Kenmure Kenmure was elected 1778 when the election was set aside for bribery practiced by David Newal writer Dfr A duel took place that election betwixt Gordon of Kenmure and Spalding of Holm who promised his vote but resiled on being offered a writership for his Brother in India—was wounded in the side

Once same Spalding Brought drunk out of Balmaghie boat & laid cross an horse before his servant & so carried to Crossmichael village

- 8 June 1801 he died at Dainville park a house he built
- 9 Cap Walter Laurie of Red Castle, explanatory enough—his Grandfather's tittle (*sic*) was Clautenpluck—he changed the name of the place to Laurieston—but some continued in scorn to call him Clautenpluck—he would have answered De'il pluck the saul out of ye —he was a very little man—a land lady once made a bill reckoning one short of the number in company—she was called in & desired to reckon again which she did making the number as before, when it was observed to her as was noticed,—she had missed Mr Laurie, pointing to him—

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O says she 'as for little master' clasping his hand, 'I do not mind him'—Mr L was 45 but sat with his back to the Land lady

10 Lord Gorlies

11 Rev James Muirhead minister of the Parish of Urr—  
Maxwell minister of the Parish of Buitte

12 Earl Selkirk

13 Oswald of Auchencruive

14 Nabobs The Hannays Sir Sam M P for Camelford died  
1792

Mr Wm Copland of Collieston & Mollins remarkable  
for large whiskers—

he married Helen daug of Sir James Dunbar of Moch-  
rum 6 Jan'y 1773 ob 6 Aug 1808

2 McAdam of Craigengillan after living with Miss  
Walker from 1798 he one day 22 Mar 1805 called in  
his servants & acknowledged a marriage with her &  
shot himself instantly After a tough (*sic*) lawsuit the  
house of Peers declared the marriage legal & her ~~£~~ (*sic*)  
sons & [or 2] daugh his heirs

### Four Additional Items

There remain to be mentioned four miscellaneous items

1 Twenty-two notes scattered through the papers (ex-  
tending from 1803 to 1834, many copied or clipped from  
newspapers) chiefly concerning various monuments to  
Burns, deaths of members of his family, and the erection  
of the Dumfries mausoleum They have no importance  
and have not been reproduced

2. A broadside, "HALLOWEEN by R Burns," one side  
of a sheet 8 x 11 in , printed in three columns, a condensed

version beginning with H&H stanza VII and omitting stanzas IX, X, XI, XII, XV, XVI, and XXVIII Not collated. It bears this docket, "22 Augt 1817 Received from Mr. Carfrae, Printer, son of Mrs Carfrae Upper Baxter's Close Edinr with whom Richmond & Burns lodged."

3. An "improbable," "Burns grace at Kirkudbright"

Some have meat & cannot eat  
Some can not eat that want it  
But we have meat & we can eat  
Sae let the Lord be thankit.

4 An anecdote, without authority, dated November, 1830.

Burns in a churchyard in Glenkens, Galloway, made the grave digger (*sic*) Jamie Todd drunk & pulled him behind a through Stone When the funeral came, they found the grave half done & James absent, they imagined he had been buried alive and set to work to relieve him—Some of the mourners wandering about found in chalk on a grave stone the following explanation

Under this stone lies Jamie Todd  
He is not dead but drunk by God



### **III**

## **THE TRAIN MANUSCRIPT**





### III

#### THE TRAIN MANUSCRIPT

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Richmond previous to Burns' residence with him paid 2/6 p Week for Room-rent—[then (*deleted*)] the[1r (*deleted*)] rent was increased to 3/— when Burns came to live with him—(a Mrs Carfrae the landlady)

Davie Sillar still lives and is, or was lately, chief magistrat (*sic*) (of Machline—I think) By the death of an uncle a partuer in a mercantile house in Liverpool of the firm of Sillar & Henderson, he succeeded to a fortune of £30,000, or £40,000

"Corn rigs" [were bonny o' (*deleted*)] This song was written in compliment to Annie Rankine—now Mrs Merry—Mr Grierson asked Mrs Merry if she remembered the particular night referred to among "the barley."—She said, *No*, with considerable naiveté, (*sic*) but added "I mind o' mony a happy night wi him, tho'" She was daughter to "rude rough ready witted Rankine"—Rankine died 2d Feby 1810 and is buried in Galston Churchyard.

Connected with the State of his health mentioned at page 20 of Mr Lockharts Life, Mr Grierson was informed by one who was his [Burns'] bedfellow, (but whose name I

forget), previous to his leaving Ayrshire that even at that early period these nocturnal faintings and suffocations were so frequent he always kept a large tub filled with cold water in the place where he slept, and often during the night he rose and plunged himself among the cold water which gave instant relief.—

In page 23 “the sweet sonsie lass” alluded to had afterwards a child to Burns—Her name was Bettey Paton.<sup>1</sup> Holy Willie.—This worthy met with the death of “poor Maillie.” He had fallen into most dissipated habits—and was found dead one morning in a ditch, into which he had fallen while drunk.

Highland Mary.—Truth deprives her history of much of its charm—Her character was loose in the extreme.—She was *kept* for some time by a Brother of Lord Eglinton’s, and even while a servant with Gavin Hamilton, [two words, “her at” (?), deleted] and during the period of Burns’ attachment it was well known that her meetings with Montgomery were open and frequent—The friends of Burns represented to him the impropriety of his devotedness to her, but without producing any change in his sentiments.—Richmond told Mr Grierson that Montgomery & Highland Mary frequently met [one word, “at” (?), deleted] in a small alehouse called the Elbow—and upon one occasion he & some of Burns’s friends knowing they were actually together in the Elbow—and having often in vain tried to convince Robert of her infidelity, upon this occasion they promised to give ocular proof of their assertions.—The party retired to the Elbow—Richmond (Mr Grierson’s informant) was one and they took their seats in the kitchen (*sic*) from which

<sup>1</sup> Here Train is in error She was Nelly Kirkpatrick, whose relations with Burns were innocent

two rooms branched off to the right and left—being all the accommodation the house contained—They had taken their position in the kitchen (*sic*), to be sure that no one could leave the [house (*deleted*)] other rooms without being observed.—After waiting long, and when Burns was beginning to ridicule their suspicions, at last Mary Campbell appeared from one of the rooms—was jeered by the party, in a general way—blushed and retired.—Another long interval elapsed and Burns began to rally his spirits, which were very much sunk—and [one word, “at” (?), *deleted*] Montgomery (Colonel or Capt) walked out of the same room—Burns coloured deeply—compressed his lip—and muttered, “*damn* it.” After enduring considerable bantering from his friends he soon gave way to the general hilarity of the evening, and his friends thought he had seen enough of Highland Mary but in a few days after, he returned “like the dog to its vomit.”

Clarinda—Richmond informed Mr Grierson that one day this personage called at their lodgings for Burns who had gone out.—Richmond knew her well, and also the nature of the intimacy which existed between her and the Poet—and he instantly volunteered his services to find out Burns—but so affraid (*sic*) were both he and Clarinda (Mrs Maclehose) that she should be discovered he locked her into their apartment (*sic*) & took the key with him.—Being unsuccessful in his search to find Burns, he at last returned and liberated the Prisoner.<sup>2</sup>—

Of Clarinda, Mr Grierson gives the following account—I cannot say on what authority—Her husband had been unsuccessful in mercantile speculations, and *retired* to the West Indies.—Sometime afterwards Clarinda fol-

<sup>2</sup> See my “Burns’ Highland Mary.” *PMIA*, LII, 3

lowed, and after a tedious [passage (*deleted*)] voyage when the vessel neared the coast of the island where her husband resided and was compelled to wait an increase of tide, so impatient was the lady to fly on the wings of love to her lord that during the night she put in to land in the Ships boat—and through the gloom of midnight approached the house where she expected to enjoy the delight of an [a few letters *deleted*] unexpected meeting after a long separation.—She entered—was ushered into some room—or ushered herself—where she should meet him, and to her astonishment and horror she found him fast asleep in the arms of a sable beauty!—She uttered not one word—walked out of the room—retraced her steps to the vessel—again took possession of her Cabin and in due time returned to Scotland without ever again setting foot on shore, or seeing her husband.

Mr Grierson has been informed that a quantity of letters *from* Clarinda *to* Burns, are still in existence—that these letters fell into the hand of some one who threatened their publication—but at last, on conditions that her own letters should be returned to her, she gave up the Poet's, as they afterwards appeared.—A transcript was said to have been taken from her letters which [one or more words *deleted*] *may* one day appear. (Mr Rob Chambers once met with Clarinda, and heard her relate some particulars of an interview she once had with Godwin, when Godwin was absurdly taciturn.)—

Epitaph on Wee Johnnie—although this epitaph appears in the first Kilmarnock Edition of Burns' Poems, Mr Grierson says in Ayrshire it is quite well known that the Wee Johnnie was John Wilson his Printer.

Creech—Some mysterious circumstances connected with the quarrel between Burns and this publisher are as yet

undivulged.—Report, which *I* have often heard, says that Creech was supposed to have smuggled an Edition into the Market unknown to Burns. It is said that Creech sent to Beugo for the Portrait (copper)—that Beugo thought it odd that Creech should do so, and assured of the Bookseller's keenness, he put a private mark upon the plate Report addeth that numberless copies of the Poems afterwards appeared with this private mark upon the portrait Mr Grierson shewed me a fragment of a letter from Burns to his wife—which the latter gave to him—as she had done the remainder of the letter to sundry collectors of relics, which fragment runs thus:—“I have settled with Creech, very much to my satisfaction, but he is not”—This is ambiguous enough in all conscience Mr Grierson says the misunderstanding between Burns and Creech was accomplished by the interference of a mutual friend a Mrs Hay—wife of Mr Lewis Hay Banker in Edinr—He thinks she or her husband are still alive, and that they are possessed both of abundant materials and recollections regarding the History of Burns.—

Highland Mary.—I should have added formerly that Grierson has a facsimile of the leaf of the Bible *exchanged* by Burns with Mary containing the inscription—in addition to what has already appeared in print the Signature of Burns is followed by his Mason's Mark which if you are a *free mason* you will understand—It is thus >—X—▷ In place of any of the commonplace facsimiles generally given of Burns' handwriting, it is likely we will give a representation of the two leaves containing these inscriptions. Mr Grierson was permitted by the surviving relations to copy these inscriptions.—One curious circumstance is worth recording—From what motive it is now

difficult to say, but one of Mary Campbell's brothers pasted a slip of paper over the *signatures* of Burns—and to read these it is necessary to hold the [light (*deleted*)] leaf between the eye and the light.—I saw a letter from another of her brother's (*sic*) to Mr Grierson stating this circumstance—and containing a lock of Mary's hair.—(It is of the true Celtic hue, and *feel*) This contains some other interesting information—I am promised copies of it—and of several other unpublished letters of Burns, by Mr G.—These were read to me—but after some weeks exertion I have hitherto been unable to procure them.—Grierson is a curious old fellow.—He has been an enthusiastic collector of such matters connected with Burns for upwards of 20 years—during which time he has repeatedly visited the various places of the Poet's residences.—

Farm of Mossgiel—This farm taken by Gilbert & Rob Burns—was a *subset* from Gavin Hamilton, Writer, Machline.

The Armourers—Jean's' (*sic*) father was only a *working* mason

Burns Marriage—Jean Armour, and Rob Burns were privately married in the writing office of Gavin Hamilton, Machline, by John Farquhar Esq of [Gilsco (*deleted*)] Gilmillscroft, J P<sup>3</sup>

Twins—I presume you are aware that Jean brought forth Twins twice in 16 months—the first pair previous to marriage—and the latter very soon after—On the birth of the

<sup>3</sup> It is possible that Train gave this information on his own authority His father had been land steward on the Gilmillscroft estate, which was formerly a part of Machline parish Ch-W (II, 335) records three accounts of the marriage, including this one, but Train's intimate connection with Gilmillscroft gives his version a distinct priority and makes it almost certain that at last the circumstances of Burns' final marriage to Jean Armour have been established

first twins Burns was at the plough and Jeans brother Adam Armour was sent to inform him—Burns came to her that evening with a guinea, and some Tea and Sugar, “which” (says Mr Grierson, my informant) was thought handsome”

Mrs. Dunlop—She was daughter to Sir Thomas Wallace of Craigie

*The Learned Pig.*—After some stay in Edinr Burns was much *taken out*, and he was honoured with many invitations, some of which appeared to him quite uncalled for—In short he saw that he was looked upon by numbers as one of the *Lions* of the day, and upon being very much pressed to join some company he, at last, observed “On one condition I shall come It is that you secure the Learned Pig also to be of the Party”—The Learned Pig was exhibiting in Edinr, at the time—

Mr Murdoch—It is difficult to put a nursery story in enduring language—but Mr Grierson mentioned a juvenile anecdote of Burns which serves to illustrate your observations at the top of page 14—While a mere child, and at Mr M’s school some person called one day on the Teacher, who went out for a few minutes—As is quite customary in village schools a dreadful uproar commenced—Mr Murdoch, at last returned—and in the meantime Robert whose seat was near the door had slipped into a press quite contiguous to it—To quell the uproar Mr M struck the *tawz* loudly against the press-door—Rob was behind it and screamed out and began to cry so loudly that he was at last suffered to go home—His mother questioned what was the matter—Robert could not answer for sometime—but by and by sobbed out “the-mas-master *payed* me! *Payed* you Robbie what for did the master pay ye?—Where did he pay you on?—



He pay—payed me on the press!" added poor Robert which created much amusement to his mother—and was long a standing joke at his expense.—

Unpublished Letters & Poems.—Of the former Mr Grierson has several given him by Richmond and others.—He read me one on the death of Richmond's master a very worthy and very aged writer—Another which refers to the situation of Jean—in which he jocularly alludes to his smuggling propensities and says since the cargoes come double he has some thoughts of commencing free Trader.—Another written under terrible excitation of feeling, when he was skulking from the misery of a jail—Mr G. has also some Poems—One an Epitaph on a Miss Burns—a certain frail sister who had availed herself of his popularity to adopt his name—Another quite in his master-vein in the style of Holy Willie's prayer—It is a sort of pennance for having assisted to ride the stang on Racer Jess who being a favourite with one of the Eglington family soon had a party of military sent to her assistance.—There is a long poem also in existence (*sic*) intitled (*sic*) "The Poet's Rambles on the Banks of the Ayr" It is said to be his longest production—Richmond has, or had it—He goes up the one side of the River, and down the other satyrizing in his most unrelenting manner if (*sic*) [one word, "gentl" (?), deleted] family situated upon the adjoining country—It can never be printed—neither can any of the others alluded to above—at least entire <sup>4</sup>—

<sup>4</sup> Of these items and the letter from Highland Mary's brother mentioned previously, only the epitaph on Miss Burns and the letter on the death of Richmond's employer are now among the papers. The other two letters are obviously Feiguson 240, l. 221, and 37, l. 35. The poem on Racer Jess is "Adam Armour's Prayer." Train's note is the only known reference to "The Poet's Rambles on the Banks of the Ayr."

**IV**

**THE YOUNG MANUSCRIPT**



## IV

### THE YOUNG MANUSCRIPT

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#### Memoir Regarding Robert Burns<sup>1</sup>

The first Life of Burns was written by my friend and Schoolfellow Dr. Currie of Liverpool. When he began the Work, I was on a visit to him and staid some days [with him (*deleted*)] at Liverpool, when we had [frequent some (*deleted*)] conversations respecting the Poet, I told the doctor that tho' I had a high admiration of his talents, [and regretted much that he had never been properly rewarded by the public, but yet at same time (*deleted*)] I thought he had brought [much (*deleted*)] a great part of his misfortunes upon himself by his own bad Conduct and propensity to Sature with very bad taste and little regard to truth, and [in particular, (*deleted*)] if he had [actually (*deleted*)] really possessed that [high proud (*deleted*)] proud spirit of freedom and independence to which he made loud claims, he never would have condescended to have become an *excuse-man*. N L (*sic*) I found there were many points in the character of Burns which the Dr. did not admire, and I am possessed of letters from him which show that it was his purpose to gloss over his failings, and make the Book as

<sup>1</sup> Young's title This note of explanation was apparently added after he had completed the memoir

profitable as he possibly could for the benefit of the Bard's helpless family.

[It (*deleted*)] In this spirit it certainly was written and I humbly think that tho' many lives of Burns have since been published, Dr Currie's and [beyond all comparison the best. Next to his (*deleted*)] after him, (if not superior to Dr Currie's) the best was Mr. Lockhart's, and perhaps there was room for *two* such works; but certainly the Ettrick Shepherd's, and some others which have since appeared, might well have been spared —

After Dr. Currie's *Life of Burns* and Mr. Lockhart's publication, [which had likewise considerable merit, I think (*deleted*)] I should [not (*deleted*)] hardly have taken the trouble of perusing more of his *Biography* by other hands, but being accidentally in a reading room in a town in the South of England, a gentleman having taken up a volume of Allan Cunningham's *Life of Burns*, and having exclaimed "that Poet seems to have had as many lives as a Cat," curiosity led me to peruse vol III of [that (*deleted*)] the *Work* after the stranger had laid it down, and the [remarks and (*deleted*)] feelings & remarks excited by its perusal made me take some notes which at my first leisure I extended in reference to "*The 3d Volume of the Life and Works of Burns by Allan Cunningham.*"<sup>2</sup>—

Notes on perusal of Vol. III of  
The Works of Burns by Allan  
Cunningham.—

P. 201.<sup>3</sup> The Heron Ballads

Mr Cunningham does not give Mr. Heron his proper

<sup>1</sup> Allan Cunningham, *The Works of Robert Burns with His Life*, London, 1834 8 vols

<sup>2</sup> Really page 261 The error appears in the rough draft and is carried over into the fair copy

designation.<sup>4</sup> It is true he had an estate in Galloway called *Kirrouchtree*, but his proper style was Patrick Heron of Heron, in the County of Lincoln, and a most amiable & excellent person he was, well entitled to represent in parl. either the Stewartry or shire of Galloway, his native country;<sup>5</sup> but not likely to be aided in the attainment of that object by<sup>6</sup> the libels & lampoons of Burns, on all those who did not support, or were opposed to, Mr. Heron's political interests, with which Burns had no more to do than he had with the affairs of the man in the moon. But he<sup>7</sup> was pleased to spare me, and never even mentioned my name, in any of his abusive couplets or epigrams so plentifully circulated in Dumfriesshire and Galloway during these contested elections, altho' I may truly say "*quorum pars magna* &c.; for I was the [principal (*deleted*)] Lawagent [and conductor (*deleted*)] of in (*sic*) both these Contests, on the part of Mr Gordon of Balmaghie and the Honble Montgomery Stewart —

[Whence this happened (*deleted*)] Whence this forbearance originated, I [was (*deleted*)] am at a loss to account for, and can now only conjecture, from my recollection of the following circumstances —

I was just entering into business when Burns came first to Edinburgh, and one of my first clients was his friend Wm Nicol, one of the masters of the High School who was the son of a Tailor in the village of Ecclefechan in Annandale, employed and patronized by my Grandfather and his family, which services were zealously returned to me

<sup>4</sup> Cunningham called Patrick Heron, "Heron of Kerroughtree"

<sup>5</sup> d reads "county," corrected to "country"

<sup>6</sup> r d deletes, "such gratuitous blackguardism & folly as that which was practised and exhibited by Burns in his malignant"

<sup>7</sup> r d deletes, "re I cannot recollect without much satisfaction and even gratitude to Burns himself, that he spared me in all his lampoons"

by Mr. Nicol in the line of my profession. I considered him, and, I believe justly, as one of the greatest Latin Scholars [that ever existed (*deleted*)] of the Age, and when I found him & Burns over their Whiskey-punch, [(which I had some times<sup>s</sup> the honor of partaking with them) (*deleted*)] bandying *extempore* translations and imitations of English, Scotch & Latin Epigrams, I could not help considering them as good exemplifications of the Italian *Improvisatori*

One remarkable instance still occurs to me. When Burns gave Nicol the following strange epitaph to translate into Latin,—

"Here lies old John Hildibrode  
Have mercy on him, gude God,  
As he would hae on thee, if he were God  
And thou wert old John Hildibrode"

After a little consideration, Nicol gave furth (*sic*) a Latin edition of this nonsense, which I thought greatly superior to the original I wrote it down, and long preserved it with some similar dogrel verses, but I now recollect the beginning only —

"Hic situs Hilbrodus,  
Quo non miserabilis alter" &c.

At this time, I looked upon Nicol as a far greater Poet and genius than Burns. He had considerable, indeed constant, employment in translating the Medical & Law Theses of the graduates at the University, for which he made liberal charges, but was very ill paid. I was employed by him to recover many of these claims [on (*deleted*)] from English students, concerning which I corresponded with the late Mr Roscoe, (then an Attorney in Liverpool), and

<sup>s</sup> I *deleted* "frequently"

on communicating to Nicol some of Mr. Roscoe's letters signifying that several of his claims were considered to be doubtful, if not desperate, he fell into an extravagant rage, [and (*deleted*)] swore, the most unseemly oaths & uttered the grossest blasphemies, that "if our Saviour were again on Earth and had employed him to translate a Thesis without paying him for it, he would crucify him over again!" [From these (*deleted*)] In consequence of these and similar exhibitions, I thought it prudent to detach myself from [these (*deleted*)] such companions, but I never had any quarrel with them, and I believe I was chiefly indebted to this early [friendship (*deleted*)] this (*sic*) connection between Nicol & Burns for my exemption from the election pasquinades of [Burns (*deleted*)] the latter, [not that I was conscious that I had ever done anything to merit that favor, being at least as assailable as my clients Gordon of Balmaghie, Murray of Broughton, or Lord Galloway, &c —<sup>o</sup>(*deleted*)]

During the whole election contest I had the good fortune to conduct matters in [the most (*deleted*)] a civil and cordial manner with Mr Heron and his Agents, except on one occasion, when Mr Heron took it into his head to write

\*rd version of this passage reads, "From these and similar exhibitions, I thought it prudent to detach myself [from such Companions (*deleted*)] from [my (*deleted*)] these Companions, [whom thereafter I most cautiously avoided, (*deleted*)] but I never had any quarre' with [them my companions (*deleted*)] them [& from that circumstance & some Kindness which I afterwards had it in my power to manifest towards Burns (*deleted*)] & I believe I was chiefly indebted to this Early friendship for my exemption from [his (*deleted*)] the Election Pasquinades [& Epigrams, (*deleted*)] of Burns not that I was conscious that I had ever done anything to merit [the distinction conferred by his malevolent abuses, Yet I was at (*deleted*)] that [public (*deleted*)] favour being at least as assailable as my Clients Balmaghie, Broughton, Lord Galloway &c [etc, who were certainly the most amiable and respectable characters in the whole district —(*deleted*)]"



to me, that he had been credibly informed I had asserted that he and his lady (Lady Elizabeth Heron, sister to the Earl of Dundonald) had got a promise from Government, that, in the event of his being successful, they would get pensions [of nearly the amount (*deleted*)] of £1000., p ann and he required me, in terms, rather rude and peremptory, to name the persons on whose authority I had circulated such a scandalous falsehood—

My answer to him was in the following words.

“Edinr 20 April 1801.<sup>10</sup>

“Altho’ your request is not conveyed to me in the politest terms, yet I have no hesitation to inform you that the information you have received is destitute of truth. I am content, Sir, with doing my duty for your antagonist Mr Stewart, without troubling myself about you or your affairs, or descending to the meanness of inventing or propagating a calumny to your prejudice.—

“If you have given any credit to the report of my being the author of such a contemptible falsehood, I must take the liberty of saying that you have paid no compliment either to my character or your own penetration.”—

On a subsequent meeting, Mr. Heron frankly told me he was convinced that I had had no hand in circulating the report which had induced him to write a hasty letter, and I assured him, I had never heard of it until I got that letter, and during the remainder of the contest—which ended, unhappily for him, in a committee of the House of Commons—we remained good friends On taking leave

<sup>10</sup> Writing in 1834, nearly forty years after Burns’ death, Young confuses the 1795 and 1796 elections for which Burns wrote the ballads, and a later one in 1802 when Mr Heron was again successful but was unseated by a committee of the House of Commons, May 10, 1803 He died on June 9, at Grantham, on his way home to Scotland.

of him before he set out for Scotland when he was unseated, he said he had been ill used by others, but never by me.—

My uncle, Alexr Orr of Waterside, was his Lawagent at the time I was bred to business in his office, and I had been very active and serviceable to Mr. Heron in prosecuting the divorce which he obtained against his first wife—a daughter of Lord Kames.—

A note of the Biographer's Mr A. Cunningham<sup>11</sup> bears, that Mr. Heron took his disappointment so much to heart, that he died *by his own hands*, [ (as was believed) (*deleted*) ] on his way back to Scotland. I never heard this before, and I think Mr. Heron was incapable of suicide. He was the successful candidate on the day of election at Kirkcudbt; but, as agent for his antagonist, I presented a petition to the House of Commons against his return, and he was unseated by a committee. I saw him before and after their report to the House, and he seemed on both occasions to be in a bad state of health. I took leave of him [shortly before his departure for Scotland, not (*deleted*) ] without any feelings of animosity—<sup>12</sup>and I lamented his sudden death wh. I am convinced did not take place by his own hand—

Page 27c.

In his third Election Ballad to the tune of "Buy broom besoms," Burns writes—

"Here's armorial bearings  
Frae the manse o'Urr,  
The crest, a sour crab-apple,  
Rotten at the core  
Buy braw troggin &c."

<sup>11</sup> Cunningham, III, 271-72

<sup>12</sup> rd continues this sentence, "and yet I had more reason to be offended with him, than with [the conduct of (*deleted*) ] his injudicious friend Mr. Robert Burns—[towards me at least (*deleted*) ]" But this addition is itself deleted

The person here alluded to was Dr. James Muirhead, minister of the Gospel at Urr, who was a poet as well as Burns, an eminent scholar, and a man of considerable humour, many specimens of which I once had in my possession, but I can now bring to my recollection only some fragments.—

In the town of Dumfries, there lived an itinerant preacher,—who had been licensed, but never obtained a Kirk,—generally known by the name of *Professor Williamson*. He gained a scanty subsistence by going from house to house in Dumfriesshire and Galloway, acting as a pedagogue and an occasional preacher. In that capacity he had been employed in the family of James McWhirter, a Bleacher & Stocking-weaver in the town of Dumfries. On becoming bankrupt, Mr Robert Ramsay, Writer & Banker in Dumfries, was appointed Trustee on McWhirter's estate, and was rather rigorous in making effectual a variety of small accounts, by actions before the Sheriff Court of Dumfries; in one of which, Professor Williamson was called for payment of a parcel of Stockings—

On receiving the Summons, the Professor waited on his friend Dr Muirhead, and requested either a loan to enable him to pay for the stockings, or a defence to be lodged in the Sheriff Court. The doctor told him that he preferred the defence, which accordingly he drew up in poetical numbers, of which a few verses only have been preserved in my memory—

It began by stating an account of *debit* and *credit* between the Professor and MacWhirter, and after describing the valuable services which had been rendered to him and his family, whereby the Professor had shewn them the *road to Heaven*, he added—

"On t'other side per contra stand  
 Three pairs of stockings given.  
 When James McWhirter drew on God,  
 Far hence were all his ills,  
 More credit his petitions had  
 Than Ramsay's London Bills" &c.

This defence was lodged in the Sheriff Court by the professor, and, in Scottish Lawphrase, the claim for the stockings was *sopited* —

Dr. Muirhead was of the *imitable* genus, and nowise disposed to submit to the abuse & sarcastic ballads of Burns, on whom he purposed to [hunt out of Society, as a public nuisance, and began to accomplish his purpose, partly (*deleted*)] retaliate by the same weapons Burns himself had made use of, whose lines on Elphinstones' (*su*) Translation~~s~~ (*sic*) of Martials' (*su*) Epigrams<sup>13</sup> contain the following apostrophe to the Translator.

O thou, whom poesy abhors,  
 Whom prose has turned out of doors,  
 Heard'st thou that groan—&c

One of these epigrams entitled "*In Vaceram quam malis artibus non locupletatum, mnatur*" is thus translated by Elphinstone—

Vile informer, slanders' (*su*) child!  
 Dealer, who hast still beguil'd!  
 Shield of war, & soul of arms,  
 How hast thou no golden charms

The original (of which the above is a most ridiculous translation) runs thus in Martial —

Et delator es, et calumniator  
 Et fraudator es, et negotiator  
 Et fellator es, et Lanista miror  
 Quare non habeas, Vacerre, nummos

<sup>13</sup> i d deletes, "are excellent"

Dr. Muirheads' (*sic*) translation, levelled against Burns, refers to other epigrams which Martial had written upon Vacerra—

Vacerra, shabby son of whore,  
 Why do thy patrons keep thee poor?  
 Bribe-worthy service, thou canst boast  
 At once their bulwark and their host  
 Thou art a sychophant and traitor,  
 A liar, a calumniator;  
 Who conscience—hadst thou that—would sell,  
 Nay, lave the common shores of Hell  
 For whiskey—Eke, most precious imp,  
 Thou art a rhymster, *gauger*, pimp.  
 Whence comes it then, Vacerra, that  
 Thou still art poor as a church rat?

This and even more bitter effusions agt Burns were printed by Dr Muirhead for the purpose of circulation, of which a [great (*deleted*)] parcel was sent to me, and another [bundle (*deleted*)] to be given to Mr Maxwell of Terraughty, which I presented to that gentleman, and after reading them over, he said that Burn's (*sic*) trash would be better answered by silence and contempt, and having thrown his own parcel into the fire, I followed his example with mine —

Page 314.

I heartily wish the four paltry squibs against the Earl of Galloway had been omitted, for they not only have neither point nor merit of any kind, but are actually gross falsehoods dressed up in metre —

His allusions to Lord Galloways' (*sic*) want of *courage*<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Apparently a reference to this epigram

No Stewart art thou Galloway,  
 The Stewarts all were brave,  
 Besides the Stewarts were but fools,  
 Not one of them a knave

and *hospitality*<sup>15</sup> had not the remotest foundation in truth. His Lordship succeeded to a very embarrassed estate; which he retrieved by prudent management, and the knowledge which he had acquired of the whole country and its products, from constant residence during the best part of every year on his own property, where he was so far from living in a mean style, that he kept the best table, and had more guests, and saw more company, than all the rest of the County put together

To impute *Cowardice* to his Lordship was also one of the most atrocious calumnies that could be invented. He was of a family of which an eminent Judge (Lord Kenyon) truly said, "all the Sons were brave and all the daughters virtuous." His Lordship's courage had been proved, on many occasions, and, in point of fact, Burns, who lived [an (*deleted*)] 100 miles distant from him, knew nothing about Lord G—He knew as little of him as he did of his own patrons Lord Stair and Mr Heron, who were opposed to his Lordship in election politics, and whom [he (*deleted*)] Burns was absurd [and foolish (*deleted*)] enough to consider as Whigs His insinuation of Lord Galloway's want of Kindness, and his request to be spared his [Lop's (*deleted*)] *vengeance*,<sup>16</sup> are equally ridiculous, for Lord Galloway was

<sup>15</sup> Apparently a reference to this epigram

What dost thou in that mansion fair?—  
Flit, Galloway and find  
Some narrow, dirty, dungeon cave,  
The picture of thy mind!

<sup>16</sup> A reference to the following epigram

Spare me thy vengeance, Galloway,  
In quiet let me live  
I ask no kindness at thy hand,  
For thou hast none to give

In this connection, it is appropriate to quote a passage from John Syme's letter to Alexander Cunningham, dated August 3, 1793 After recounting various adventures during his and Burns' tour of Galloway,

one of the kindest and most popular landlords in all the South of Scotland—beloved by the Tenants of his own paternal inheritance, and of the various [properties (*deleted*)] estates afterwards purchased by him, as well as by all his neighbours; and he was one of the firmest and most steadfast friends that ever existed—

[Burns might very safely *depreciate* his vengeance. for I could have told him that when I mentioned to his Lop what had passed between Terraughty and me, he said the old laird was a wise man, and as for himself, it would not

---

Some tells of their being soaked by a storm and of their "vengeance at Gatehouse by getting utterly drunk." The next morning "Burns was quite discomfited—a sick stomach, headache &c lent their forces & the man of verse was quite *accable*. Mercy on me how he did fume & rage—nothing would reinstate him in temper—I tried all I could think of, at length I got a lucky hit—across the bay of Wigton I showed him Id Galloway's house—He expectorated his spleen against the aristocratic elf and regained a most agreeable temper—I have about half a dozen of capital extempores which I dare not write—But I may *repeat* and you shall hear them some time—I declare they possess as much point and classical *terseness* if I may so express myself, as anything I can imagine. O, he was in an epigrammatic humour indeed—I told him it was rash to crucify Id G—in the way he was doing for tho he might not receive any favours at his hands yet he might suffer an injury—He struck up immediately—

Spare me thy vengeance G—ay

In quiet let me live,

I ask no kindness at thy hand

For thou hast none to give."

It will be easily seen that here Burns was indulging his taste for epigrams, often more bitter than apt, and almost always unprovoked and recklessly imprudent. Cromek's descriptive phrase, repeated by later editors "On The Author Being Threatened With His [Lord G's] Vengeance," is a mischievous interpolation. What can one say of Cunningham's note? "The sharp squibs were launched against the house of Galloway during the Heiron contest. Though 'The Stewart' at first felt offended, he smiled it is said, when he considered how wayward the muse is, and how hot even the calmest blood grows during an election."

become him, when his good old master The King despised and disregarded the paltry attacks of a Peter Pindar, to feel himself hurt by those of a licentious, rhyming ploughman.—(*deleted*)]

P. 316

Of the Epitaph on John Bushby I got a copy soon after it was made, from my friend Mr John Syme, which was somewhat different from what is here printed—

“Here lies John Bushby, honest man!  
Catch<sup>17</sup> him Devil, if ye can”—

I put it into the hands of Mr Bushby as soon as it was received, and he merely laughed at it, seeming to think it rather complimentary, and said he would ask the fellow to dine with him some day at Tenwald downs, where I heard he went with his friend Mr Syme, who was intimate with Mr Bushby—

That gentleman was at one time a Writer or an Attorney, but had given up [that (*deleted*)] practice long before the time of Burns [Before (*deleted*)] & when Burns came to Dumfries Mr Bushby held the lucrative office of Sherriff Clerk of the County, which disqualified him from practising as a Writer or Attorney—& he retained that office for all the rest of his life—He was not a man to be moved with such paper bullets, and if ever he had come in personal conflict with the Bard, the latter, strong as he was, would have stood no chance whatever with Mr B—He on one occasion observed that he could not conceive why the poor devil had thought proper to run a muck against all those who could best do him a service, and none of whom, as far as he knew, held him at ill will—

Mr Bushby was factor or Steward on considerable estates

<sup>17</sup> Cunningham prints, “cheat”



both in Scotland and England, in which capacity he may not have been popular with the tenants, as is the case in general with factors, whether they deserve it or not; but I am sorry Mr Cunningham, who appears to me to be impartial in general with regard to the merits and follies of Burns, should have received such bad information with regard to Mr Bushby, as is contained in the following paragraph—"It is said that as he lay on his deathbed, "*knock* followed *knock* at his door, and (*creditor*) succeeded "*creditor* so fast, demanding money, that the sinking man "turned his face sullenly away, and muttered, they *winna* "let me die, by G—d!"<sup>18</sup>

Mr Bushby did not reside in Dnmfries, but at his villa of Tenwald-downs, some miles distant from it, where there could be no *knocks* at his door, nor would any *duns* or creditors have been admitted to disturb him in his dying moments. Besides, this paragraph contains intrinsic evidence of its falsehood, for he was a native of the north of England and always expressed himself in the broad English dialect of that country, the words *winna* and *canna* formed no part of his vocabulary. All that the Editor has detailed regarding this Gentleman is most incorrect & absurd.

But when Mr Cunningham was making such a general *expose* (*sic*) of the Works of Burns in this line, he might have included the following, written by him upon a relation of mine, Mrs Young, formerly Mrs. Grizzel Craik, the widow of Thomas Young Esq of Lincluden College, founded by Archibald the *Grim* Earl of Douglas—

Here lies with Death, auld Grizzel *Grim*  
 Lincluden's ugly witch,  
 O Death! thou surely art not nice  
 To lie with *sic* a b—ch—

<sup>18</sup> A good example of Cunningham's creative editing *cp* Grierson notes, IV. Honest Allan here has embroidered the common gossip about William Bushby and gives Bushby's seat as Tinwald downs

## Page 72.

Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, so often mentioned in this Work with much applause, was my Schoolfellow, and in the same class with me at Dr. Chapmans' (sic) in Dumfries.

In that Class also were Dr. William Charles Wills of London, Dr. James Currie of Liverpool, Dr George Bell of Manchester, Wm Cunningham of Enterkin &c; and I am sure it would have astonished all these as much as it does me, to read such praises of the most heavy, dull youth, the least of a Scholar, and the most incorrigible dolt<sup>19</sup> in our class He did not come much forward into the World; after we quitted School,<sup>20</sup> I used to meet him at the Assizes and Dumfries Elections, when we always shook hands cordially, in remembrance of old Class fellowship, but that he should have been commemorated, as is done in these volumes, seems to me most extraordinary. I think the secret must have lain in his marrying an excellent and amiable lady of the name of Kennedy, whom all his old School fellows admired, as much as they under-valued him <sup>21</sup>—

## Page 111

The *Heron* here mentioned<sup>22</sup> I became slightly acquainted with when I was a boarder in Dr Blacklocks' (sic), and I always considered him to be a very disagreeable, conceited and ignorant person On one occasion he brought to me

<sup>19</sup> r d deletes, "blockhead "

<sup>20</sup> r d deletes, "and I know no ill of him "

<sup>21</sup> Cunningham, with journalistic ease, dubbed Riddell "a distinguished antiquarian "

<sup>22</sup> In the poem "To Dr Blacklock," dated Ellisland, 21st Oct 1789 Robert Heron wrote a *Memoir* of Burns, the first extended account of him, in 1797 He knew Burns in Edinburgh and visited him at Ellisland He was Dr Blacklock's assistant, and later Dr Hugh Blair's The paragraph on Heron and the preceding paragraphs on Robert Riddell and Miss Grizzel Craik, have been deleted

(on the supposition of my being a good French Scholar, which I was not) a translation of *Tales from the French* similar to the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*, in which I found he had uniformly christened the word *Hotel* with the epithet of *Inn*, and on my noticing to him that he ought to leave it as it was—*Hotel*, or call it *house*, or *palace*, if he would translate it, he took his Manuscript away with him in great dudgeon; and though we met afterwards, we were never cordial, and he most justly considered me as a very indifferent Linguist.

Page 222.

The character of John Maxwell of Terraughty is admirably and truly given.<sup>23</sup> He was bred a Carpenter; and I have often heard him pique himself on his skill in that handcraft. It was, as he told me, the fashion of Scotch gentlemen at the time to breed up their younger Sons to such professions or trades, and that his friend and contemporary Sir George Clark Maxwell, sometime a Commissioner of the Customs, and afterwards Baronet, the Grandfather of the present Sir George of Pennycuik, was bred a *Wabster* i. e. a weaver—

I have seen this excellent old man (Mr. Maxwell) in some particular Situations, and always had more and more reason to admire him—on one occasion I was present at a singular colloquy between him and one of his tenants of the name of David Brait, who wanted an extension of his lease for a considerable period, with an addition of more land; on which Mr. Maxwell said to the old man, "David! 'ye've surely taen a *yard* hunger, for to my knowledge, 've're aboon fourscore"—to which David answered "that

<sup>23</sup> In the poem, "To John Maxwell of Terraughty on his Birth Day" The letter referred to at the end of this note on John Maxwell is not now with the memoir.

"comes weel frae you Laird, for to my knowledge ye're four  
"score and ten." What was the issue of the treaty I know  
not, but they parted very good friends—See Letter "Being  
&.—

Page 201.

Miss Elizabeth Burnet, second daughter of Lord Monboddo, is frequently mentioned by Burns with great admiration, and most justly, for she was remarkably handsome and a very amiable young woman. She had one great personal defect however,—her teeth were much [decayed and (*deleted*)] discoloured, but fortunately she had a very small mouth, and took care not to open it much in mixed company. She was moreover, what is not noticed (either by the Poet or his Biographer) herself a poetess, and a very clever woman. She<sup>24</sup> & her Eldest Sister always accompanied their father on horseback, to and from Monboddo, their journey lying thro' the village of Laurence Kirk, erected in Kincardineshire by his friend and brother Judge Lord Gardenston, who was nearly, if not altogether, as eccentric a man as Lord M. himself.—

This Village was Lord Gardenston's hobbyhorse. He introduced many manufactures into it, and amongst others, the Snuff-boxes known by the name of the village, and still much admired. In the Inn which he established here, a large *Album* was kept, which was frequently enriched by quotations and donations from his own pen. The Miss Burnets in an idle hour<sup>25</sup> took occasion to insert a short address to his Lordship, imitated from the Prologue to the Rehearsal —

<sup>24</sup>rd deletes, "rode beautifully on horseback and"

<sup>25</sup>rd deletes, "waiting till the horses were fed, 'for her father abhorred the inside of any post chaise or [any (*deleted*)] other Vehicle)"

"We well might call this bloated book of yours  
 A poesy of weeds and not of flowers.  
 Yet such have been presented to our noses,  
 And some there are, I fear, who've thought them  
 roses."—

Lord Gardenston, who frequently inspected his Album, was very irritable, and, taking offence at the above imitation, wrote below it with his own tremulous hand,

"This plagiarist writer censures without sense for though  
 "there are some things in the Album improper, yet every  
 "person will reap much entertainment from the variety of  
 "quotations."

Which produced from the fair lady the following philippic—

"My Lord, do not growl,  
 'Cause the verses are stole  
 Altho' you smart under their lash,  
 Should you purge your chaste olio  
 Of each borrowed folio,  
 I fear you'd leave little but trash  
 Yet, your Lordship should know,  
 'That a dangerous blow  
 From no such a fair arm could come,  
 For the stroke of a wand  
 From a Lady's soft hand  
 Is a compliment paid your *Album* <sup>28</sup>  
 Then dont take it ill  
 That a feminine quill  
 Has ventured to tickle your Tobv,  
 But allow her to urge,  
 That, if you will purge,  
 You first should consult Dr. Boby x

X Dr Robert Stewart of Fiddes, an eminent physician in Laurence Kirk

<sup>28</sup> r d "A Gentl—On being permitted to read this [act of (*deleted*)] *jeu d'esprit*, added—"all legunt, *Auld Bum*," which produced its immediate Consignation to the flames, from which being partly recovered, the rest was supplied by memory." This whole passage deleted

X<sup>27</sup> Lord Monboddoo certainly had not the reputation of giving the *most elegant entertainments*<sup>28</sup> in the northern metropolis as is said by Mr Cunningham. Many of his bretheren on the bench were far more remarkable in that line, tho' he was certainly hospitable, and gave [a great (*deleted*)] many dinners, [and (*deleted*)] That his apartments were decorated *with flowers of all hues* and his guests *regaled with music*, is no doubt true; for his two charming daughters were partial to *music* and Botany. The eldest, who was married to Mr Kirkpatrick Williamson, tho' not so handsome as the second, was likewise a most amiable and accomplished young lady. But On the article of *Wines*, [his Lordship was as ignorant as a child. A

<sup>27</sup> The large X calls attention to an extended marginal note, as follows "Since writing these notes chiefly from memory, I happened coming from Fort George to Perth to stop & dine at Laurence Kirk and on enquiring at the Landlord for Lord Cairnstone's Album he told me that it still existed & was often called for by travellers. I begged of him to bring it to me which he did, and sorry was I to find (July 1834) that it had been much disfigured & mutilated and latterly [much disfigured & (*deleted*)] I may say [even (*deleted*)] contaminated by worthless insertions [of low blackguard (*deleted*)] by a low set of travellers—I had the happiness however to find the lines above quoted very complete and a copy of them was made by my daughter now the wife of Capt'n Victor of the Royal Engineers.

I offered the Innkeeper five guineas for the remains of Lord Cairnstone's album, wh he declined, on grounds in which I could not possibly contest the validity, and on his telling me that the books [in (*deleted*)] and the library [in which they (*deleted*)] were [kept were (*deleted*)] in pretty good order, I took a cursory inspection of them, and made some enquiries at him respecting the present family of [the (*deleted*)] Garden of Troop, and their estate dont je fais peu de cas, and I presume others will do the same"

<sup>28</sup> A reference to Cunningham's remark, "He had the reputation of giving the most elegant entertainments during his day in the northern metropolis he had flowers of all hues and wines of all qualities odours as well as light were diffused by lamps, nor was his entertainments without the charm of music." See in this connection, Hope's remarks on Young's Memoir, *post*

(*deleted*)<sup>29</sup> a Lawyer (Lop Cullen) of his intimate acquaintance, who afterwards joined him on the Bench, told me that Lord M. did not know Claret from Port, yet, that being [one of the (*deleted*)] Counsel in the famous Douglas Cause, and one of those who went to France, to take the proofs in that country, he on his return dubbed himself a great admirer and judge of Claret, and yet, [this gentleman (*deleted*)] Mr Cullen assured me that he had seen a bottle of Port imposed upon his Lordship as excellent Claret, and recommended by him as such to a large company —

I thought this at the time rather Apocryphal, but I afterwards had an opportunity of witnessing in person, that great pretenders to judgment in Wine may very easily be deceived. My friend Mr John Irving of the Middle Temple esteemed himself the greatest judge of Port in Britain but Sir Robert Herries, (who when he was a banker in London was also a merchant in Barcelona) sent Mr Irving a present of some of the Wine of that [district (*deleted*)] Country, as being excellent Port, and I saw some of it presented at his table as such, and highly applauded by Mr Irving. But the hoax when discovered bred a coolness betwixt these two parties, altho' Sir Robert pleaded that it was a clear proof of Mr Irving's judgment, for *Black Strap* was a [wine (*deleted*)] much Superior wine to *Port*, and with good reason might he say so, for when the English were in possession of Toulon, Sir Robert cleared several thousand pounds by cargoes of that wine, which he transmitted to them from Barcelona —

I am mistaken, however, in saying that the gentleman who told me this anecdote of Lord Monboddo's judgment in Wine afterwards joined him *on the Bench*, for his Lord-

<sup>29</sup> I delete, "and in most things the greatest bundle of quaintness & univalled affectation that ever existed"

ship never sat on the Bench, he always took his seat at the table below, near the clerks of Session, [with the purpose, it (*deleted*)] and was [supposed, of (*deleted*)] render [ing (*deleted*)] ed [himself (*deleted*)] more conspicuous by his Crimson gown, in contrast with their black ones.—

Of his literature and classical knowledge I had at one time a great opinion, but I found that his clerk Mr. Hunter, afterwards Professor of Humanity in the University of Saint Andrews, was a [much (*deleted*)] greater Scholar than his Lordship. Of this I had convincing proofs afterwards. Having discovered that my Lord did not read Plato, or at least, did not quote Plato from the original Greek, but trusted entirely to translations, and even quoted from the errors of these translations, I conveyed an extract to his Lordship, who candidly acknowledged that he had quoted from the Latin translation of *Ficinus*, and the mistakes were the translators, not his. The proof of this, has been long preserved by me, and bears, "Lord Monboddo, in his origin and progress of languages vol 2 p 107, thus translates a passage of Plato's Cratylus [396d]—

"He (Socrates) says he had caught inspiration from Euthyphron, an enthusiast of those times, with whom he had conversed *that morning*"—

The original is *εωθεν γαρ πολλη αυτω σπυνην (Ευθυφρωνω nempe) και παρειχον τι ωτα* [sic, without accents], which Ficinus thus translates. Illi siquidem astuti a *matutino* assiduis auresque porrevi. Does not his Lordship quote rather from Ficinus than Plato? He *tells* us he used this edition."

#### Page 304

With Mr John Syme of Ryedal I was intimately acquainted. He was the only son of Mr John Syme W. S. who was Law agent for several of the principal families in



Galloway and wished to breed his son to the same profession, but the young man preferred the Army, from which he was prevailed upon by his father to sell out after a few years service, being still unable to conquer his aversion to the legal profession, he rather chose to follow agricultural pursuits, and having married and settled in Dumfries, he obtained the office of Collector of Stamps in that district I recommended him as factor to my old Schoolfellow Dr. Currie of Liverpool, when he purchased the estate of Dumcrief in Annandale. And I likewise got him employed as factor to my client Wm Neilson of Liverpool when he purchased the large estate of Newbie, belonging to the Marquis of Annandale. In consequence of my being the Law agent for these two estates, I had frequent intercourse with my friend Mr. Syme, who was an enthusiastic admirer of Burns, [though hardly more so than I was myself of his genius and talents, which, when I first knew him, I thought placed him in the same rank with Robert Fergusson, as a poet, but I soon came to be of opinion that he had far outstripped Fergusson.—(deleted)]

Mr. Syme frequently invited me to parties and jovial meetings at Dumfries with his friend Burns, but I must own I rather avoided his company, whilst at the same time I lamented the unfortunate situation in which he had been placed and the narrow circumstances in which he had *involved* himself, and on one occasion, when a client of mine—a shopkeeper in Dumfries—was *persecuting* [prosecuting (*correction*)] him for the price of a suit of Clothes & some furnishings to his family, I offered to Mr Syme not only to ask indulgence, but also to pay the debt for him, which my friend advised me not to do, as the high spirit of Burns would not brook my interference in such a matter.—

[I had reason however to presume on a future occasion, when [he was near the end of his unhappy career and (*deleted*)] want and destitution pressed hard on him and his family, that, he had not been so fastidious and might have accepted, if not solicited, some assistance [from me (*deleted*)], which I for one would most willingly have given. (*This whole passage deleted*)]

I happened to be returning with my wife from London, and we meant to visit Dr Muirhead, then at Spottes in Galloway; but Mrs. Young being taken ill, in place of proceeding to the doctor's residence. I wrote to him to meet and dine with us at Dumfries, so as we might proceed to Edinr next day. Mr. Syme and Burns saw us as we stopped at the George Inn, and I remarked to my wife that poor Burns looked miserably ill. In a short time a message came to us, that Mr Syme and Mr. Burns would be happy to dine with us. Expecting however Dr Muirhead, I could not hazard the consequences of a meeting betwixt them, and of course sent our excuse.—<sup>80</sup>

This was the last time that I saw Burns; and Mrs Young & I have ever since regretted that we had not accepted his offer of dining with us, and sent an express to Spottes to prevent Dr Muirhead from coming to Dumfries.—

The next time that the Poet and his works were brought to my recollection was on finding my friend Dr. Currie

<sup>80</sup> r d deletes, "I had scarcely done so. when turning to the Window of the parlour in which we were, I saw on a pane of Glass the following lines on a noted character in Dumfries, a little hump [*ed (deleted)*]-backed, irascible, litigious lawyer of the name of Glen— [The words were (*deleted*)]

David Glen, the best of little men

Of the lawyer Kind *when drunk*

which [on being (*deleted*)] on a former occasion [being (*deleted*)] pointed out to Mr Syme & Burns then present, the latter took out his diamond pen & added the words *Sober or drunk*"—

at Liverpool busily engaged in writing his *Life*; to which he had been mainly induced by his factor Mr Syme. The Doctor put many questions to me regarding Burns, to which I [begged him to be satisfied with (*deleted*)] generally made one answer—"That I greatly admired the *Poet*, but disliked the *Man*."

Since writing [some (*deleted*)] these notes on perusal of the 3d vol of Cunninghames' (*sic*) *Life of Burns*, I have read the 8th, being the last volume of that work, containing remarks on *Scottish Song*, in which I think there are several errors, but that upon the whole it is [the most curious volume of the *Work*—(*deleted*)] a valuable addn to the *Life of Burns*.

After some notice of the Song called "Bess the Gawkie," he adds, "Tradition ascribes the composition of this Song 'to William Morehead the minister of Urr, in Galloway' 'he was a maker of Verses, and falling under the lash of 'Burns, avenged himself by some satiric lines which have 'much ill nature but no wit.'"

The person here alluded to is evidently Dr. Jas. Muirhead of Logan Minister at Urr [in Galloway (*deleted*)], some notice of whom and his [political (*deleted*)] squabbles with Burns will be found in my Notes on Vol 3d of this *Work*,—Though the doctor wrote verses, he certainly was not so good a Poet as Burns, but most assuredly he never intended to measure his strength with him, He was not the aggressor in his warfare with Burns, who without any provocation in his doggerel election Ballads which had neither wit nor merit of any kind that I could perceive [the doctor (*deleted*)] first attacked the Doctor who had a good right to pay Burns in his own coin—and if, as the Editor says, [the (*deleted*)] his Satirical lines had much ill nature but no wit, they were the more on a par with those in which Burns

had previously [made an attack on him (*deleted*)] commenced this warfare N L (*sic*) Altho' the late Mr. Maxwell of Terraughty, & I destroyed the copies that were sent to us of the doctors' (*sic*) verses, others were not so careful of the reputation and feelings of Robert Burns, and it consists with my knowledge that no publication in answer to the scurrilities of Burns ever did him so much harm in public opinion or made Burns himself feel so sore as Dr Muirhead's translation of Martial's ode [of Vascera (*deleted*)] to Vacceras —

When I remonstrated with the doctor against his printing and circulating that translation I asked him how he proved that Vacceras was a *gauger* as well as Burns, [to which (*deleted*)] he answered "Martial calls him bellator, which means a Sucker or a man who drinks from the cask" —

p 10 Roslyn Castle it is said was the production of [Roger Ewen (*deleted*)] Richard Hewit, a young man who was amanuensis to Dr Blacklock. N. I. (*sic*) Intimate as I was with the doctor, and much as I admired these verses, I never heard of this anecdote before But it is also said that Burns was indebted for the anecdote to Dr Blacklock himself, and that he was on the most intimate & friendly footing with the Dr. [Blacklock (*deleted*)] on his first visit to Edinr. is unquestionable —

I have still however some doubts on the subject, for it is added that Richard Hewit was the boy taken to lead the *blind* doctor during *his residence in Cumberland*, but according to my recollection he performed that office for the doctor in the town of Annan, where Dr Blacklock's father was a Bricklayer He may however have *led* the dr both in Cumberland & [Ireland (*deleted*)] Anuandale, but he

was much more likely in the latter to have [had the (*deleted*)] heard Roslyn Castle & composed [for (*deleted*)] the verses which it is said he wrote for it.

- p. 38 "There's nae luck about the House"—[There (*deleted*)] N. L. (*sic*) There is certainly an error in the Statement of this Ballad having first come on the streets in 1772, and that the composition of the Song was not much anterior to that period, for when I was at Annan School [anterior to this period (*deleted*)] some part at least of this beautiful Song was often [used (*deleted*)] sung by one of the maid servants of the Revd. Mr. Wm. Wright our master, afterwards minister of Newabbey And the boys of Mr. Wrights' (*sic*) Academy used often to prevail on her to Sing it to them with other favorite Scotch Songs by which they were originally impressed on my memory—<sup>31</sup>

- p. 59 "Bide ye yet."

It consists with my knowledge that this Song was composed by the lady here mentioned,<sup>32</sup> for I have heard her sing it, as well as an other Song [s (*deleted*)] of her own composition, but the Account given of her in this compilation contradicts all my knowledge both of this lady, her talents and family, and yet of these I ought to have a pretty accurate knowledge, inasmuch as I was well acquainted with her from my infancy till very near the period of her death—<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Young here pushes back the composition of this song possibly twenty years. He was a young man just beginning practice in 1786, he is writing in 1834, his schooling in Annan must have been in the 1760's. Burns places the composition of the song "long posterior to Ramsay's days," and says, "about the year 1771, or 72, it came first on the streets as a ballad."

<sup>32</sup> Miss Jenny Graham, of Dumfries

<sup>33</sup> Cunningham's lively "account" is as follows "The authoress was

Miss Jenny Graham was one of the daughters of Graham of Shaw, an old and respectable family in Annandale in the parish of Hutton and [Covan (*deleted*)] Cowic, of which my father and grandfather were ministers for a period of 75. years.—

During the time of being at School both at Annan and Dumfries, I frequently saw Miss [Jenny (*deleted*)] Graham [of Shaw (*deleted*)], and early conceived a high respect for her, as eminent in talents & qualifications above what [generally (*deleted*)] often fall [s (*deleted*)] to the lot of her sex. She was a good Poetess and had a great deal of humour. When I first knew her, she resided chiefly at Westerhall with Lady Johnstone, who was the sister of Patrick Lord El [l (*deleted*)] ibank, the mother of Sir James Johnstone and Sir Wm Pulteney, and a person of extraordinary and rare endowments. Miss Graham was one of the prime favorites of this lady till the day of her death. I afterwards knew Miss Graham when I was a boarder at Dr Chapman's the master of the Grammar School at Dumfries. She then resided in the family of Major Walter Johnstone, brother to Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall, who was one of the original [bankers (*deleted*)] partners of Messrs Johnstone Lawson & Company, by whom Bank Notes were first issued in Dumfries. I had the honor of being invited some times to dine at this gentlemen's' (*ur*)

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a maiden lady, she lived to a good old age and died of an asthma, the pain of which she alleviated in composing humorous Scottish songs. She was a fine dancer in her youth, a young nobleman was so much charmed with her graceful movements, and the music of her feet, that he enquired in what school she was taught. 'In my mother's washing tub,' was the answer." It would seem that here as elsewhere, Cunningham's narrative is more picturesque than reliable.

house on Saturdays, and [on one occasion (*deleted*)] I shall never forget a scene at which I happened to be present. N L. The Major had a very bad practice of cursing & swearing at his Servants, especially for any blunders or mistakes committed by them when [they were (*deleted*)] waiting at Table—He had on one occasion poured forth such a torrent of abuse and imalediction against an unfortunate Annandale youth who had incurred his displeasure, that I expected Miss Graham would rebuke him for it, but on the contrary she added such a [pale (*deleted*)] peal of curses to the Majors as astonished the whole company & none more than the Major himself, who burst into a fit of laughter when she proposed to desist from such an unseemly practice if he would promise to do the same and I was told several years thereafter that he was hardly ever known thenceforth (*sic*) to swear at or curse a [single (*deleted*)] a (*sic*) servant [thereafter (*deleted*)]

Miss Graham resided in Edinr when I attended the College there [afterwards (*deleted*)], and some of her nearest relations (Miss Bell of Crurie and others) then lived with her I remember her complaining occasionally of an indifferent state of health, but that in alleviation of the pains of *Asthma* she composed *humourous* Scottish Songs I regard [to be (*deleted*)] as sheer nonsense, altho' I know that she did actually write several pieces of humour, not however to be Sung, but to be recited and to raise a laugh in company and I have heard the late Dr [Samuel (*deleted*)] John Rogerson (who was the Son of a small farmer in the same parish with Mr Graham of Shaw, the father of Miss Graham), rehearse some of her poems

of a very humorous nature, and on one of these occasions I took the liberty of remarking to the doctor that his remembrance of our old friend Miss Graham proved that she was a better Poetess than similar recollections did of his great friend & patroness the Empress Catherine of Russia.—

That Miss Graham was a *fine dancer*—"had charmed a young nobleman by her graceful movements—and told him she *had acquired them in her Mothers' washingtub*," I am satisfied must appear to all those who knew her as well as I did, to be arrant nonsense, having no foundation whatever in truth.

p 67. "Fife and a' the lands about it."

Is said to have been composed by Dr Blacklock and [tho' (*deleted*)] Burns certainly had good access to know what Songs were written by the doctor, but I knew the doctor in early life, before Burns ever saw him, and I cannot subscribe to the censure & severity of his criticisms on some of the Songs composed by [the (*deleted*)] doctor Blacklock and his poems in general. He was blind and if not actually born so, had no recollection of having ever enjoyed the blessings of sight, but yet he described natural objects and the feelings of mankind in general in a most vivid and [pleasant (*deleted*)] pleasing style, and making allowance for his want of sight, I humbly think some of his Songs will bear comparison with the best of those [Songs (*deleted*)] that were written by Burns himself.

125 "Whistle and I'll come to you my Lad "

In reference to this Song, as composed by Dr. Blacklock, it is said "The blind bard had a fine ear 'but external nature had begun to fade and grow



'dim in his remembrance." No wonder that it should, [when he was (*deleted*)] he being merely an infant when he lost his sight, which never supplied his descriptions. These were taken from other Writers, and in general were remarkably correct—.

Dr. Blacklock not only composed several good Songs but likewise sung his own compositions in a most scientific, pleasing style, accompanied by the *psalter*, an instrument on which he played with great taste and skill, until a paralytic affection in his hands, which had taken place before Burns knew him, made him lay aside that instrument & desist from those recitations which were so agreeable to all his boarders & pupils, & which were admired even by the celebrated Dr. Samuel Johnstone ["i" and "e" (*deleted*)]

I cannot think that justice is done to Dr. Blacklock in this work, and yet he was one of the best friends and sincerest admirars (*sic*) Burns ever had —

106 "The Higland or 42d Regiments' March"—

It is said was composed by "Sir Harry Erskine, a wit, orator, and poet" He was a well informed, agreeable gentleman, and author of some *minor* poetry, but I never before heard that he was either a wit or an orator. I knew him only as the Honble Mr H. Erskine brother to the Earl of Kellie<sup>84</sup> [originally "Kelly"].

146. "The Tears I shed must ever fall"—

"This Song it is said was composed by A Miss Cranston"

I should be glad to know if Mrs Dugald Stewart,

<sup>84</sup> Young's marginal note "In this note I find I have fallen into an Error, as to the Author of the 'Garb of old Gaul &c, which has been most obligingly Corrected by The Lord President The Right Honl Chas Hope"

the lady here meant, acknowledges this performance, and recognizes the description given of her by Burns, who certainly lay under greater obligations to her husband than to all the rest of the World.—But I shall pursue this Subject no longer. That Burns was [really (*deleted*)] a great poet, and an extraordinary man, seems to me unquestionable; but the abuse of his country and countrymen, for not bestowing on him a greater share of praise and patronage [and of comfortable (*deleted*)] with more comfort and independence than he actually enjoyed, [may well in my opinion be easily refuted and (*deleted*)] in my humble opinion admits of the most satisfactory contradiction.—



v

# THE HOPE MANUSCRIPT



## V

### THE HOPE MANUSCRIPT

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#### Robert Burns<sup>1</sup>

I met Burns several times at dinner in different Houses, when he first came to Edin but I was not at all intimate with Him That visit of his to Edinr was a great misfortune to him, & led to all his after follies & misconduct, & ultimately to his ruin & premature death—to all of which his Intimacy with Nicol mainly contributed—Nicol, as you say, was a good Scholar, but I did not consider him as a *better* Scholar than Adam or Fraser—His passions were quite ungovernable (*sic*), & He was altogether a most unprincipled Savage—He persecuted poor Adam by every means in his power, & at last was guilty of a brutal Assault on him, for which the Magistrates did not expell him, as they ought to have done—As a specimen of Nicols unprincipled disposition, & at the same time of his Selfish cunning, take the following Anecdote—You Know it was at that time the Custom for the Rector once a Week to go & examine the Class of one of the other Masters, who, at the same time, came into the Rectors Class & examined it—On one of those occasions (*sic*), when I was Dux of the Rectors Class, Nicol came to examine us— He seemed to be in particular good

<sup>1</sup> Lord Granton's title

humour, anticipating, I have no doubt, the triumph he expected over the Rector—He went on for some time in the usual way, hearing us translate & construe—He then began to put some difficult questions, which Several of the Boys could not answer, but on putting them to me & other boys at the Head of the Class, they were all answered—At last He put a question which neither I nor any other Boy could answer—On which He turned to me & said, You are a pretty fellow, Sir to be at the Head of this School—not to be able to answer this question—I'll show you that your Cousin John Hope (the late Lord Hopetoun) in my Class can answer it, & make you ashamed of yourself—He then called the Janitor & desired Him to call John Hope to come to Him—John came & the Question was put to him, but John could not answer it—Nicol was evidently very angry, but He had the Selfish Cunning not to outrage the Son of Such a Man as Old Lord Hopetoun—So He merely desired Hope to go away & send Elliott, the Heriotter, to Him—Accordingly Elliott came, & the question was repeated to him, but He did not answer it either, on which the Savage lost all command of himself, flew at poor Elliott, seized & shook by both Ears, till He almost tore them off, & quite forgetting himself, exclaimed You Scoundrel, Have not I been dunning this into you for a week past—showing that He had been leading his Boys out of their depth, & attempting to make them get by rote things they did not understand, in hopes of having it to say, that His Boys only in the third Class were farther advanced than the Rectors—This explosion operated like Electricity on the Class—There was a universal shout & Hiss, & we all ran out of the school, leaving Nicol frantic but stupefied with rage—So much for Nicol

Mr Heron—I agree with you as to your Character of

this amiable Gentleman, & I don't believe a word of his alledged Suicide—Indeed I never heard a Surmise of it at the time, or indeed till I read it in your Memoir—I don't know if you ever heard of the Maneuvre, by which He carried His return at the Election to which you allude—If not, I will tell it you, for it cannot be so well described on paper.

Mr Maxwell of Munches—

His letter which you quote, is so curious as to the state of the Country in his Youth, & so curious considering his age at the time of writing it, then 91 that it is a pity it is not published

Lord Monboddó—I was very well acquainted with Lord M & rather a favorite of his, which originated in the following Circumstance, Characteristic of his peculiar turn—I was in a hearing in presence very soon after I came to the Bar—When I had finished my Speech, Lord Monbo came up & was pleased to compliment me on my appearance—& Said I perceive, Mr Hope, that you have been educated in England—may I ask at what School—I told him—Did you learn Greek there? I said Yes We began the Greek Grammar at the same time with the Latin, & carried on both Languages together—Aye, there is the thing, said Monboddó, & now I suppose You can read Greek almost as well as you can do English—Why I said, my Lord I am sorry to say that I have forgot a good deal of my Greek since I came to Scotland—Aye, there is the thing again now—Mr Hope will you do me the honor to sup with me to night—He was better pleased to hear that I had partly forgot Greek in Scotland, than that I had learned it England (*sc*), for it suited his Theory as to the proficiency of the two Countries in that Language—And at Supper He prelected on me & my information & I was a great favorite—If I had time, I



believe I could furnish a pretty good Collection of Monboddiana—One I recollect just now, which will give you a Specimen of his peculiar fancies, & of the Force & Epigrammatic (*sic*) manner in which He expressed himself—At one of his Suppers (for it was always Supper parties that He had, never dinners) He began the usual Subject of the degeneracy of Mankind, which He exemplified thus—Look at the President (Dundas) a tolerable sized Man—Look at his Son the Solicitor (*sic*)—There is the Justice Clerk (Miller) a good portly person—Look at his son Willy Miller—And even Lord Alva *has contrived* to get a Son less than himself—

On another Occasion, having started the same Subject, One of the party asked him, what Height He Supposed Achilles to have been—Why, said He, Achilles I think could not have been less than 10 or 12 feet high—Upon which I said, then I think we can have a good guess as to the Size of the generality of the Greeks—for Achilles is said by Homer to have been the Head & Shoulders Taller than Ajax, & that Ajax was a Head & Shoulders taller than any other man in the Army—Now if you deduct Two Heads & Shoulders of such Men, it wont leave above 6 feet as the height of the other Greeks—Monboddie did not like this remark, & I was rather out of favor for a week or two—

What you say of Miss Burnett is quite correct—Her teeth were not good—& she was not very well made below—She had very thick Clumsy Anles, which She was at the pains to conceal by wearing her petticoats uncommonly long—& she was not a good Dancer—but take her all in all was a beautiful Creatme—

I have no doubt that her Father hastened her fate, by his folly in attempting to make her too hardy, by accompanying him, on all his Journeys (except to London) on Horseback—As a specimen of his Absurdity in his treatment

of her—I was at a Ball & Supper given by Mrs Dundas at Arniston, in the Xmas Holidays, 1784-5 or 85.6 I forget which—Miss B danced a good deal, & the room was crowded & hot—We went to supper about 12 o’clock—When Miss B was missing—On which Mrs. Dundass (*sic*) exclaimed—Surely the Monster has not carried her off—Charles, to me, run & see—So I went & I actually found Her Father and She in the Stable Yard, mounting their Horses to ride back to Edinr—so I took forcible possession of his Daughter, & brought her back to a warm Supper & Bed, leaving Monro—to prosecute his ride if He chose—& I have no doubt, that this prolonged her life, for heated as She was, that ride must have killed her

Whether Lord M was himself a good Judge of Wine, I do not know—But this I know, that his Wine was always excellent especially his Claret—Thus He treated in a peculiar way—He always bought it in the Cask—& then cased, & put it into a Hot House—where it ripened in a few months more than it would have done in as many Years in Bottles—Sometimes He used to have a Magnum of Claret brought in with a Chaplet of Flowers round the Neck of it—He always mixed a few drops of Seltzer Water with His Claret, as He said it was a Mark of Debauchery among the Ancients to drink their wine unmixed with Water—Nay he insisted that they used to mix *Sea* Water with it—Thus He grounded on a passage in one of the poets (I forget which) who speaks of *Vinum Expers Maris*—We endeavoured to persuade Him that this only meant Vin de paix, which had not been imported by Sea from abroad—But He would not be convinced, but said He did not approve of *Sea* Water, & preferred *Seltzer*—

Lord Monboddo was an excellent Horseman, & a Keen Fox Hunter, & being exceedingly Shortsighted, He often got into very dangerous Sciapes—He had a famous Horse,

which he called *Alborac*, after the Horse of the Prophett (*sic*)—On one occasion, in following the Hounds, He attempted a leap which, if he had seen the exact nature of it, He probably would not have ventured—The consequence was, that Alborac & He fell & tho Lord M escaped, poor Alborac broke his Neck—& Old John Davidson, who was an Excellent Scholar, & a great friend of Monboddos, wrote a Latin Epitaph on Alborac—I forget the whole of it, but the point was, "*Qui suam frangendo, vix Domini collam servavit*"—

Sir Henry Erskine was certainly the author of the words of the March of the 42d Regt—In the garb of old Gaul &c—Whether He also composed the Music, I do not know—But you confound him with the facetious Andrew Erskine, brother of Lord Kelly, who afterwards drowned himself a little way from my house at Granton—Sir Harry Erskine was not of the Kelly but of the Buchan family He was son of Sir Charles who was Son of Sir John, a Brother of Lord Buchan—In fact He was Sir Harry Erskine of Alva, but was obliged to sell that Estate, which was purchased by his Brother the Justice Clerk Tinwald—who was Succeeded in it by Lord Alva, who again Sold Alva to Mr Johnstone—Sir Harry was a General Officer, & Colonel of the 42d, & married a Sister of Wedderburn afterwards Lord Rosslyn by whom He was Father of the present Lord Rosslyn—Sir Harry died about the year 1765—when his Son this Lord Rosslyn was only 3 years Old—He was a great favorite of George 3d in his Younger days, & succeed (*sic*) my Relation Sir William Breton as privy purse to the King—I never heard whether Sir Harry ever composed any other Lyrical Effusions except the march of the 42d—but poor Andrew Erskine composed many—& was really a Wit & a great companion of Sir John Whiteford, Matthew Hendersson (*sic*) & all that set—

**VI**

**THE JOURNAL OF THE  
BORDER TOUR**



## VI

### THE JOURNAL OF THE BORDER TOUR

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#### Introductory Note

The only occasions on which Burns is known to have kept a regular journal were his tour of the Border in May, 1787, and his visit to the Highlands in the late summer of the same year. Dr. Currie, the poet's first authorized biographer, made some slight use of these documents, but what was alleged to be the complete text was first published by Allan Cunningham in 1834, after being further quoted by Lockhart in his *Life of Burns* in 1828. When the original of the Highland journal again came to light some years ago it proved to be considerably briefer than Cunningham's printed text. Mr. J. C. Ewing, who in 1927 edited the work in facsimile, believes the additions to have been made by Burns himself in a recension, now lost, of his original penciled notes. Professor Snyder regards Cunningham himself as the author of the revisions.<sup>1</sup> In the absence alike of Burns' enlarged manuscript and of any proof that such a manuscript ever existed, Snyder's conclusion is the only one that makes sense. Cunningham's reputation as editor and biographer is so justly suspect that the burden of proof rests upon the defenders of his text.

<sup>1</sup> F. B. Snyder, *Life of Robert Burns* (New York, 1932), pp. 211 and 254 note.

The printed text of the Border journal remains as Cunningham published it. The original manuscript is now in the possession of Lt.-Col. Sir John Murray, D.S.O., of London, to whom I am indebted for permission to use a photostatic copy. The manuscript was bequeathed in 1873 to Sir John's grandfather by Mr Hope Scott of Abbotsford, whose father had received it from Lockhart himself. Comparison with Cunningham's text reveals no rewriting and expansion such as the Highland journal suffered. Instead, we find Cunningham omitting several hundred words, though at the close he gives three entries which are not now, and apparently never were, with the rest of the journal. The main text, moreover, is followed by fourteen pages of miscellaneous memoranda, some of which, like the omitted passages of the diary itself, have biographical significance.

In its present state the journal comprises fifty-seven pages, octavo in size and all written in ink except a few of the miscellaneous notes at the end. Nine leaves at the beginning have been torn out—the act, Sir John states, of someone to whom his grandfather rashly lent the book. Initial letters remaining on the stubs of these leaves indicate that they contained verse which must have totaled ninety or a hundred lines. Occasionally a whole monosyllable, such as “To,” “An’,” “For” or “With” remains, but it is impossible to identify the missing material with any of Burns' published work. In all likelihood it was some of his “cloaciniad” verse, and fell victim to an attack of Victorian righteousness.

In December, 1934, I published in *PMLA*<sup>2</sup> the greater part of Cunningham's omissions, with such information as

<sup>2</sup> Vol. xlix, pp. 1107-15. My opening paragraphs, above, are from that article, somewhat condensed.

I had been able to collect about the people and places mentioned. Those tentative and incomplete notes I do not care to reprint. The ideal edition of the Journal would be fully annotated and accompanied by a facsimile. But I can aspire neither to the Scottish sojourn requisite for preparing such an edition nor to the Scottish patronage requisite for publishing it. Hence I gladly take this opportunity of at least making available the complete and un-doctored text, and of modestly adding myself to the long list of editors who have shirked the job of annotation.

Cunningham suppressed no important biographical data, yet the Burns of his text is a less solid figure than the peasant of genius who filled his journal with the materials for future erotic reveries, suffered increasing boredom from heavy farmers, and saw through the pretensions of patronizing gentry. This is too self-conscious to be a great journal but it is essential Burns, and it adds one more to the growing list of documents in which the poet has a chance to speak for himself without the intervention of an editor equipped with scissors, eraser, and a moral pocket-handkerchief to hold before his streaming eyes.

DILLANCY FERGUSON

*Western Reserve University*



## The Journal of the Border Tour

May 6<sup>th</sup>

Left Edin<sup>r</sup>. [*May 5*]- Lammermuir hills miserably dreary but at times very picturesque- Lanton edge a glorious view of the Merse-reach Berrywell-Old Mr. Ainslie an uncommon character-his hobbies Agriculture natural philosophy & politics- In the first he is unexceptionably the clearest-headed, best-informed man I ever met with, in the other two, very intelligent- As a Man of business he has uncommon merit, and by fairly deserving it has made a very decent independance- Mrs Ainslie an excellent, sensible, cheerful, amiable old woman-Miss Ainslie an angel-her person a little of the embonpoint but handsome her face, particularly her eyes full of sweetness and good humour-she unites three qualities rarely to be found together, keen, solid penetration, sly, witty observation and remark, and the gentlest, most unaffected female Modesty-Douglas, a clever, fine promising young fellow- The family meeting with their brother, my companion [*sic*] de voyage, very charming, particularly the sister-

The whole family remarkably attached to their menials-Mrs A-full of stories of the sagacity & sense of the little

girl in the kitchen—Mr A—high in the praises of an African, his house servant— All his people old in his service—Douglas's old Nurse came to Berrywell yesterday to [tell (*deleted*)] remind them of its being Douglas's birth day—

A Mr Dudgeon, a Poet at times, a worthy, remarkable character—[a good deal of (*deleted*)] natural penetration, a great deal of information, some genius, and extreme Modesty—

Sunday—went to church at Dunse—Dr. Bowmaker a man of strong lungs and pretty judicious remark, but ill skilled in propriety, and altogether unconscious of his want of it—Monday [May 7]—Coldstream—went over to England—Cornhill—glorious river Tweed—clear & majestic—fine bridge—dine at Cold<sup>m</sup>. with Mr Ainslie & Mr Foreman—beat Mr F— in a dispute about Voltaire—tea at Lenel house with Mr Bryden— Mr Brydon a man of quite ordinary natural abilities, ingenious but not deep, chearful but not witty, a most excellent heart, kind, jovous & benevolent but a good deal of the French indiscriminate complaisance—from his situation past & present an admirer of every thing that bears a splendid title or possesses a large estate— Mrs Brydon a most elegant woman in her person and manners, the tones of her voice remarkably sweet— My reception from Mr. & Mrs. Brydon extremely flattering— Sleep at Coldstream—

Tuesday [May 8]—breakfast at Kelso—charming situation of Kelso—fine bridge over Tweed—enchancing views & prospects on both sides of the river, particularly the Scotch side, introduced to Mr Scot of the royal bank—an excellent modest fellow—visit Roxburgh Palace—fine situation of it—ruins of Roxburgh castle—a holly bush growing where James 2<sup>d</sup> of Scotland was accidently killed by the bursting of a cannon—a small old religious ruin and a fine old

garden planted by the religious, rooted out and destroyed by an English hottentot, a Maitre d'hotel of the Duke's, a Mr. Cole, climate & soil of Berwick shire & even Roxburgh shire superiour to Ayrshire—bad roads—turnip & sheep husbandry their great improvements—Mr. McDowall at Caverton mill a friend of Mr. Ainslie's, with whom I dined today, sold his sheep, ewe & lamb together, at two guineas a piece—wash their sheep before shearing—7 or 8 lb of washen wool in a fleece—low markets, consequently low rents—fine lands not above 16 sh Scotch acre—Magnificence of Farmers & farm houses—came up Teviot & up Jed to Jedburgh to lie, & so wish myself goodnight.

Wednesday [May 9]

Breakfast with Mr. Fair in Jedburgh a blind man but the first man of business as a Writer in town—a squabble between Mrs F—, a craz'd, talkative Slattern and a sister of hers an old maid, respecting a relief Minister—Miss gives Madam the lie, & Madam by way of revenge upbraids her that she laid snares to entangle the said minister, then a widower, in the net of matrimony—go about two miles out of Jedburgh to a roup of Parks—meet a polite soldier-like gentleman, a Capt<sup>n</sup> Rutherford who had been many years thro the wilds of America, a prisoner among the Indians—

Charming, romantic situation of Jedburgh, with gardens, orchards, &c intermingled among the houses—fine old ruins, a once magnificent Cathedral [and strong castle (*deleted*)]—All the towns here have the appearance of old, rude grandeur, but extremely idle—Jed a fine romantic little river—

Dine with Capt<sup>n</sup> Rutherford The Capt<sup>n</sup> a specious polite fellow, very fond of money in his farming way, but showed a particular respect to My Bardship—his lady exactly a proper matrimonial second part for him—Miss Ruther-

ford a beautiful girl, but too far gone woman to expose so much of so fine a swelling bosom—her face tho' very fine rather inanimately heavy—return to Jedburgh—walk up Jed with some ladies to be shown Love-lane & Black-burn two fairy scenes—introduced to Mr Potts, Writer, a very clever fellow, & Mr Somerville the clergyman of the place, a man & a gentleman, but sadly addicted to punning—The walking Partie of ladies—Mrs F— & Miss Lookup her sister before-mentioned. N B these two appear still more comfortably ugly & stupid, and bore me most shockingly—[The (*deleted*)] Two Miss Fairs, tolerably agreeable but too much of the Mother's half-ell [features (*deleted*)] mouth & hag-like features—Miss Hope, a tolerably pretty girl, fond of laughing & fun—Miss Lindsay a good-humour'd amiable girl, rather short et embonpoint, but handsome and extremely graceful—beautiful hazle eyes full of spirit & sparkling with delicious moisture—an engaging face & manner, un tout ensemble that speaks her of the first order of female minds—her sister, a bonie, strappan, rosy, sonsie lass— Shake myself loose, after several unsuccessful efforts, of Mrs F—r & Miss L—p and somehow or other get hold of Miss Lindsay's arm—my heart thawed into melting pleasure after being so long frozen up in the Greenland bay of Indifference amid the noise and nonsense of Edinr— Miss seems very well pleased with my Bardship's distinguishing her, and after some slight qualms which I could easily mark, she sets the titter round at defiance, and kindly allows me to keep my hold, and when parted by the ceremony of my introduction to Mr Somerville she met me half to resume my [hold (*deleted*)] situation— Nota Bene—The Poet within a point and a half of being damuably in love—I am afraid my bosom still nearly as much tunder as ever—

The old, cross-grained, whuggish, ugly, slanderous hag.

Miss Lookup with all the poisonous spleen of a disappointed, ancient maid, stops me very unseasonably to [fall abusively foul (*deleted*)] ease her hell-rankling bursting breast by falling [foul (*deleted*)] abusively foul on the Miss Lindsays, particularly my Dulcinea, I hardly refrain from cursing her to her face— May she, for her pains, be curst with eternal desire and damn'd with endless disappointment! Hear me, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth! may the burden of antiquated Virginity crush her down to the lowest regions of the bottomless Pit! for daring to mouth her calumnious slander on one of the finest pieces of the workmanship of Almighty Excellence Sup at Mr. F— vexed that the Miss Lindsays are not of the supper party as they only are wanting—Mrs F—r & Miss L—p still improve infernally on my hands—

Set out next morning [*May 10*] for Wauchope the seat of my correspondent Mrs Scot—breakfast by the way with Dr Elliot an agreeable, good-hear[ted] climate-beaten, old veteran in the medical line, now retired to a romantic but rather moorish place on the banks of the Roole—he accompanies us almost to Wauchope—we traverse the country to the top of Bonchester, the scene of an old encampment, & Woolee hill—

Wauchope— Mr Scot exactly the figure [commo (*deleted*)] and face commonly given to Sancho Pança—very shrewd in his farming matters and not unfrequently stumbles on what may be called a strong thing rather than a good thing, but in other respects a compleat Hottentot— Mrs. S— all the sense, taste, intrepidity of face, & bold, critical decision which usually distinguish female Authors— Sup with Mr Potts—[a fine (?) (*deleted*)] agreeable Partie—Breakfast next morning [*May 11*] with Mr Sommerville—the bruit of Miss Lindsay and my Bard—

ship by means of the invention & malice of Miss L—p— Mr Sommerville sends to Dr Lindsay begging him & family to breakfast [but at all ev (*deleted*)] if convenient, but at all events to send Miss L— accordingly Miss L— only comes— I find Miss L— would soon play the devil with me—I meet with some little flattering attentions from her—

Mr<sup>s</sup> S— an excellent, motherl[y], agreeable woman, and a fine famil[y]—Mr Ainslie & Mr. S— Jun<sup>rs</sup>. with Mr. Fair, Miss Lindsay and me, go to see Esther, a very remarkable woman for reciting Poetry of all kinds, and sometimes making Scotch doggerel herself— She can repeat by heart almost every thing she has ever read, particularly Pope's Homer from end to end—has studyed Euclid by herself, and in short is a woman of very extraordinary abilities— on conversing with her I find her fully to come up to the character given of her—She is very much flattered that I send for her, and that she sees a Poet who has put out a book as she says— She is, among other things, a great Florist—and is rather past the meridian of once celebrated beauty but alas! tho very well married, before that period she was violently suspected for some of the tricks of the Cytherean Déesse—

I walk down Esther's garden with Miss L— and after some little chit-chat of the tender kind I presented her with a proof-print of my nob, which she accepted with something more tender than gratitude— She told me many little stories which Miss L—p had retailed concerning her and me, with prolonging pleasure—God bless her!

Was waited on by the Magistrates and presented with the freedom of the burgh—

Took farewell of Jedburgh with some melancholy, disagreeable sensations— Jed, pure be thy chrystal streams, and hallowed thy sylvan banks! Sweet Isabella Lindsay,

may Peace dwell in thy bosom, uninterrupted, except by the tumultuous throbbings of rapturous Love! That love-kindling eye must beam on another, not me, that graceful form must bless another's arms, not mine!—

Kelso—dine with the farmer's club—all gentlemen, talking of high matters—each of them keeps a hunter from 30 to 50 £ value, and attend the fox-huntings in the country—go out with Mr Ker one of the club, [to lie (*deleted*)] and a friend of Mr. Ainslie's, to lie— Mr Ker a most gentleman[ly], clever, handsome fellow, a widower with some fine children—his mind & manner astonishingly like my dear old friend Robert Muir in Kilmarnock—every thing in Mr. Ker's most elegant—he offers to accompany me in my English tour—dine next day [*May 12*], a devilish wet day, with Sir Alexr. Don—Sir A D a pretty clever fellow but little in him—far, far from being a match for his divine lady—poverty & pride the reigning features of the family—lie at Stodrig again, and set out [*Sunday, May 13*] for Melrose—visit Dryburgh, a fine old ruined Abbey, by the way— Still bad weather—cross Leader & come up Tweed to Melrose—dine there and visit that far-fam'd, glorious ruins— Come to Selkirk, up Etrick the whole country [on T (*deleted*)] hereabout, both on Tweed and Etrick, remarkably stony—

Monday [*May 14*]—

Come to Inverleithing a famous Spaw, & in the vicinity of the palace of Traquair, where having dined, and drank some Galloway-why. I here remain till tomorrow—saw Elibanks & Elibraes so famous in bauldy song today—on the other side of Tweed—

Tuesday [*May 15*]

drank tea yesternight at Pirn with Mr Horseburgh. Breakfasted today with Mr Ballantyne of Hollowlee— Pro-

posal for a four-horse team to consist of Mr. Scot of Wauchope Fittie-land, Logan of Logan Fittie-furr; Ballantine of Hollowlee Forewynd, Hor[se]burgh of Horseburgh Forefurr— Dine at a country Inn, kept by a Miller, in Earlston, the birth-place and residence of the celebrated Thomas A Rhymer—saw the ruins of his castle— Come to Berrywell—

Wednesday [May 16]—dine at Dunse with the farmer's club— Company—impossible to do them justice—Rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr Smith a famous Punster and Mr Meikle a celebrated Mechanic and inventor of the threshing-mills—lie again at Berrywell— Thursday [May 17] breakfast at Berrywell & walk into Dunse— To see a famous knife made by a Cutler in Dunse and to be presented to an Italian Prince— A pleasant ride with my friend Mr Robt Ainslie & his angelic sister to Mr Thomson's a man who has newly commenced farmer, & has married a Miss Patty Grieve formerly a flame of Mr R. Ainslie's—company—Miss Jacky Grieve an amiable sister of Mr<sup>s</sup> Thomson's and Mr Hood an honest, worthy, facetious farmer in the neighbourhood—

Friday [May 18]—ride to Berwick— An idle town, but rudely picturesque— Meet Lord Errol in walking round the walls—his Lordship's flattering notice of me—dine with Mr Clunzie Merch<sup>t</sup>—nothing particular in company or conversation—come up a bold shore & over a wild country to Eyemouth—sup & sleep at Mr Grieve's—

Saturday [May 19]—spend the day at Mr Grieve's— Made a royal arch Mason of St Ebbe's Lodge—Mr W<sup>m</sup> Grieve, the eldest brother, a joyous, warm-hearted, jolly, clever fellow—takes a hearty glass & sings a good song—Mr Robt his brother and partner in trade a good fellow but says little—Mr [name left blank] Schoolmaster, of the partie an agre-



able fellow—take a sail after dinner—fishing of all kinds  
pays tithes at Eyemouth—

Sunday [May 20]—A Mr Robinson, a Brewer at Ednam sets  
out with us for Dunbar—

The Miss Grieves very good girls—My Bardship's heart got  
a brush from Miss Betsy—

Mr Will<sup>m</sup> Grieve's attachment to the family-circle so fond  
that when he is out, which by the by is often the case, he  
cannot go to bed till he see if all his sisters are sleeping  
well—pass the famous Abbey of Coldingham & Pease bridge  
—call at Mr. Sherriff's where Mr. A— & I dine—Mr. S— a  
talkative, conceited Idiot—I talk of love to Nancy all the  
evening while her brother escorts home some companions  
like himself— Sir James Hall of Dunglass having heard of  
my being in the neighbourhood comes to Mr Sheriff's to  
breakfast—takes me to see his fine scenery on the stream of  
Dunglass—Dunglas[s] the most romantic sweet place I ever  
saw—Sir James & his lady a pleasant happy couple—Sir  
James shows me a favorite spot beneath an oak where Lady  
Helen used to ponder on her lover Sir James being then  
abroad—he points out likewise a walk for which he has an  
unconimon respect as it was made by an Aunt of his to  
whom he owed much— Miss—[sic] will accompany me to  
Dunbar by way of making a parade of me as a sweetheart  
of hers among her relations—she mounts an old cart horse  
as huge and as lean as a house, a rusty old side saddle with-  
out girth or stirrup but fastened on with an old pillion  
girth—herself as fine as hands could make her in cream  
colored riding clothes, hat & feather, &c I, ashamed of my  
situation, ride like the devil and almost shake her to pieces  
on old Jolly—get rid of her by refusing to call at her uncle's  
with her—

Past thro' the most glorious corn country I ever saw till

I reach Dunbar a neat little town—dine with Provost Fall an eminent Mercht. and most respectable character but undescribable as he [has no (*deleted*)] exhibits no marked traits—M<sup>rs</sup>. Fall a genius in painting, fully more clever in the fine arts & sciences then [*sic*] my friend Lady Wauchope without her consummate assurance of her own abilities—Call with M<sup>r</sup> Robinson (who, by the by, I find to be a worthy much respected man, very modest, warm, social heart which with less good sense than his would be perhaps with the children of prim precision & pride rather inimical to that respect which is man's due from man) with him I call at on Miss Clarke, a maiden, in the Scotch phrase, "Guid enough but no brent new," a clever woman, with tolerable pretensions to remark and wit, while Time had blown the blushing bud of bashful modesty into the full-bosomed flower of easy confidence— She wanted to see what sort of raree show an Author was; and to let him know that though Dunbar was but a little town yet it was not destitute of people of parts—

Breakfast next morning [*May 22*] at Skateraw, a M<sup>r</sup> Lee's, a farmer of great note—M<sup>r</sup> Lee an excellent, hospitable, social fellow, rather oldish, warm-hearted & chatty—a most judicious sensible farmer— M<sup>r</sup> Lee detains me till next [day (*deleted*)] morning [*May 23*]-comp at dinner—my rev<sup>d</sup> acquaintance D<sup>r</sup> Bowmaker, a rev<sup>d</sup>., rattling, drunken old fellow—two sea Lieutenants, a M<sup>r</sup> D Lee, a cousin of the Landlord's, a fellow whose looks are of that kind which deceived me in a gentleman at Kelso, and has often deceived me, a goodly, handsome figure and face which incline one to give them credit for parts which they have not—M<sup>r</sup> Clarke, a much cleverer fellow, but whose looks a little cloudy and his appearance rather ungainly, [make rather (*deleted*)] with an every-day Observer may

prejudice the opinion against him— Dr Brown, a medical young Gent. from Dunbar, a fellow whose face & manner are open and engaging— Leave Skateraw for Dunse next day along with Collector Lorimer, a lad of slender abilities and bashfully diffident to an extreme—

Found Miss Ainslie, the amiable, the sensible, the good-humored, the sweet Miss Ainslie all alone at Berrywell— Heavenly Powers who know the weaknesses of human hearts support mine! what happiness must I see only to remind me that I cannot enjoy it!

Lammermuir hills from East Lothian to Dunse, very wild— Dine with the Farmer's club at Kelso.— Sir Jn<sup>o</sup> Hume & Mr Lamsden there but nothing worth remembering when the following circumstance is considered—I walk in to Dunse before dinner, & out to Berrywell in the evening with Miss Ainslie—how well-bred, how frank, how good she is! I could grasp her with rapture on a bed of straw, and rise with contentment to the most sweltering drudgery of stiffening Labor!

[Thursday (*deleted*)]—Mr Kerr & I set out for to dine at Mr Hood's on our way to England—

Charming Rachel! may thy bosom never be wrung by the evils of this life of sorrows, or by the villany of this world's sons!

I am taken extremely ill with strong feverish symptoms, & take a servant of Mr Hood's to watch me all night—em-bittering Remorse scares my fancy at the gloomy forebodings of death—I am determined to live for the future in such a manner as not to be scared at the approach of Death—I am sure I could meet him with indifference, but for "The Something beyond the grave"— Mr Hood agrees to accompany us to England if we will wait him till Sunday—

[Thursday (*deleted*)]

Friday [May 25]

I go with Mr Hood to see the rroup of an unfortunate Farmer's stock—rigid Economy & decent Industry, do you preserve me from being the principal Dramatis Persona in such a scene of horrors! Meet my good old friend Mr Ainslie who calls on mr Hood in the evening to take farewel of my Bardship—this day I feel myself warm wt. sentiments of gratitude to the Great Preserver of men who has kindly restored me to health and strength once more—A pleasant walk with my young friend Douglas Ainslie, a sweet, modest, clever young fellow—

Saturday [May 26]

ride out with Mr Hood to see the curiosities at Mr Swinton's, his Landlord—fine collection of Persian & other Oriental paintings, Boydell's Prints, &c —

Sunday—27<sup>th</sup> May

Cross Tweed an[d] traverse the moors thro' a wild country till I reach Alnwick—Alnwick castle, a seat of the Duke of Northumberland, furnished in a most princely manner—A Mr Wilkin, an Agent of His Grace's, shows us the house & policies—Mr W— a discreet, sensible, ingenious man—

Monday [May 28]—

Come, still through byways, [to] Warworth [*sic*] where we dine—hermitage & old castle— Warkworth situated very picturesque with Coquet Island, a small rocky spot the seat of an old monastery, facing it a little in the sea; and the small but romantic river Coquet running through it—Sleep at Morpeth a pleasant little town, and on next day to Newcastle— Meet with a very agreeable, sensible fellow, a Mr Chattox, a Scotchman, who shows us a great many civilities and who dines & sups with us—

[Tuesday (*deleted*)]

[*The following entries, printed by Cunningham, are not now with the MS*]

Wednesday [May 30]—Left Newcastle early in the morning, and rode over a fine country to Hexham to breakfast—from Hexham to Wardrue, the celebrated Spa, where we slept.

Thursday [May 31]—Reach Longtown to dine, and part there with my good friends Messrs Hood and Kei — A hiring day in Longtown — I am uncommonly happy to see so many young folks enjoying life — I come to Carlisle (Meet a strange enough romantic adventure by the way, in falling in with a girl and her married sister—the girl, after some overtures of gallantry on my side, sees me a little cut with the bottle, and offers to take me in for a Gretna-green affair. I, not being quite such a gull as she imagines, make an appointment with her, by way of vive la bagatelle, to hold a conference on it when we reach town — I meet her in town and give her a brush of caressing and a bottle of cyder, but finding herself un peu trompée in her man, she sheers off) Next day [June 1] I meet my good friend, Mr Mitchell, and walk with him round the town and its environs, and through his printing-works, &c —four or five hundred people employed, many of them women and children.— Dine with Mr Mitchell, and leave Carlisle — Come by the coast to Annan — Overtaken on the way by a curious old fish of a shoemaker, and miner from Cumberland mines

[*"Here," says Cunningham, "the Manuscript abruptly ends" It contains, however, the following miscellaneous notes*]

Kilmainock 15<sup>th</sup> [June?] 1787 Rec<sup>d</sup>. from M<sup>r</sup> Rob<sup>t</sup>. Muir eleven pounds ten shillings Sterl. to acc<sup>t</sup> of copies of my book sent to him —

D<sup>o</sup> from D<sup>o</sup> on same acc<sup>t</sup> one pound five shillings

D<sup>o</sup> from D<sup>o</sup> on same acc<sup>t</sup> two pounds ten shillings

To Miss F[errier]

[Nae heathen I here (*deleted*)]  
 Nae heathen name shall I prefix  
 O' gentry frae Parnassus,  
 Auld Reekie dings them a' to sticks  
 For rhyme-inspiring lasses—

Tune, Duncan Davison

There was a lass they ca'd her Meg  
 The brawest lass in a' the town  
 And mony a lad her love did beg  
 Thro' a' the country round and round

[*Here follows what is apparently the first draft of the elegy On the Death of Sir James Hunter Blair. The greater part of the first and second stanzas, and the whole of the tenth, are written in ink, the remainder, in pencil, is almost completely illegible.*]

17

Glasgow 1<sup>st</sup>. April 1778 G Arms Spiers, Mur & Co N<sup>o</sup> 107

12

D<sup>o</sup> Thistle bank  $\frac{294}{12}$  2<sup>d</sup> Aug<sup>r</sup> 1783

these two five £ notes sent by post 'o my brother

[*A page of illegible penciled memoranda follows*]

James Hog, Shoemaker, Buchanan's Land, head of the Cannongate—

Miss Russell N<sup>o</sup> 20 Great Mary le bon London

Mem. To enquire for a M<sup>r</sup> Clarke, Rector of a grammar School somewhere about Saltcoats or Irvine

Direct for D<sup>r</sup> Moore To Major Moore M P. Clifford Street, Burlington Gardens—

Jas Candlish—at M<sup>rs</sup> Barrs first land above the Crosswell  
 Glasgow [*Not in Burns' hand*]

We'll aiblins get a flyte and aiblins nane  
 We'll say it was fan ye fell o'er the stane  
 And hurt sae sair as coudna rise your lane!

Memorandum—to write out the preceeding part of this Poem for M<sup>r</sup> Fall—Dunbar.

Whitelaw 3 miles from Haddington 7 miles from Dunbar  
250 p<sup>r</sup>. Annum

Will<sup>m</sup> Lumsden W.S. Apply to

19 miles from Ed<sup>r</sup>. 1 mile from Leably Sinclair

Edin<sup>r</sup> August 14<sup>th</sup> 1787

Payed to M<sup>r</sup> Miers for two profiles on account of M<sup>r</sup>  
Aiken, Ayr, 15 sh —————

Whoep, a glen between two hills—

Parreck, to force a ewe to Mother an alien lamb by closing  
them up together—

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